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**“We are heartbroken and furious!’ Engaging with  
violence in the (anti-)globalisation movement(s)”**

Sian Sullivan

CSGR Working Paper No. 123/03

January 2004

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WARWICK



**‘We are heartbroken and furious!’ Engaging with violence in the (anti-)globalisation movement(s)**

Sian Sullivan

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**Abstract**

This piece is intended as an exploratory comment on the militancy emerging in (anti-)globalisation political practice and in the policing of such practice, rather than as a definitive analysis. As someone who attempts to pursue a tradition of the ‘organic intellectual’ – engaging in the practice of activism as well as the theorising of activist practice – the paper has emerged from my own process of sense-making regarding violence in the ‘(anti-)globalisation movement(s)’. It flows from experience of irruptive situations, my perceptions of the contextual causes of violence in these situations, and my thinking around the subversive and transformative potential, or otherwise, of violence in engendering radical post-capitalist social relations. I take as a starting point the recent protests against the EU summit meeting in Thessaloniki, June 2003, which culminated in substantial violence against property and towards police by antiauthoritarian protesters, and was met by the police with violent attack and the brutalisation of those arrested. I do not assume a moral standpoint regarding the value or otherwise of violence to ‘the movements’. Instead I try to consider why violence is increasing as a bio-political tactic in these contexts, ‘upfronting’ both the normalisation of psychological and physical violence in the everyday circumstances of late-capitalism, and the depression and anger this engenders. In the interests of strategic debate regarding the usefulness of violence in potentiating post-capitalist social relations, however, I attempt to disentangle the relative (f)utility of acting out, acting upon and denying the experience of anger. My personal stance is to celebrate the transformative potential and energy of the correct attribution of the contextual sources of anger – particularly in shifting between the microcosm of individual circumstances and the macrocosm of structural societal violence within which these arise – whilst upholding a view that violence as a simple reaction to alienating circumstances is likely to maintain rather than shift their brutalising tendencies. My conclusion is both gloomy and hopeful. On the one hand, given that violence to life is both so systemic to late capitalist modernity and that ‘we’ tend to be in such denial regarding its dehumanising psychosocietal effects, I am clear that it is likely that the incidence of violence in protest politics as elsewhere will increase in reaction to this. On the other hand, I celebrate the creative energy present in global anti-capitalist actions and practice, the emergence of a global peace movement as a political force, and the current radicalisation of people otherwise deemed by some to be politically apathetic.

**Keywords:-** violence/violation, militancy, militarisation (of police), (anti-)globalisation movements, anti-capitalism, new social movements, anarchism, depression, anger, bio-politics

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## Contexts (... or light implies consciousness of dark)

In the last 10 years, 3,000 workers and 1,000 members of the public have died in work-related incidents [in Britain]. Most of these deaths result from corporate activities (Bergman 2003).

Between 1994 and 2001, basic pay rises for directors outstripped those for their average employees by a factor of 3:1 (TUC 2002).

The EUs agricultural policy has eased ... thousands of small and medium farmers out of their traditional occupation. In Greece itself the unemployment level has reached 12 per cent and the number of people below poverty 25 per cent! (Yechury 2003: 2).

While ninety-five farmers committed suicide in 1988 [in Punjab, India], there was a 10-fold increase by 1999 with 986 farmers committing suicide (Sharma 2003: 2). [In Karnataka, India] [m]ore than 500 farmers have killed themselves since 1995 (NewsTabs 2003).

On September 10, opening day of the Fifth Ministerial of the World Trade Organization, Lee Kyung Hae climbed the fence that separates the excluded from the included and took his life with a knife to the heart. Lee, leader of the Korean Federation of Advanced Farmers Association, had been excluded for most of his professional life. A farmer working with farmers, he watched as hundreds of his neighbors were driven off their lands and separated from the only livelihood they knew. He spoke eloquently and passionately of the death of hope in the Korean countryside, the sense of impotence and the anger against policies that promoted imports over national production (Carlson 2003).

For three months thousands of debtors have been coming to La Paz from all parts of Bolivia to stage daily protests. These had pacifist beginnings but later became more radical., going as far as attempting to burn banks. During the conflict, because of the misery and desperation surrounding them, more than six debtors have committed suicide. ... Twelve days ago Aymara farmers blocked highways in the Altiplano region to demand an end to neoliberalism. The state responded by murdering two of them. The answer was dynamite attacks on powerline towers (Juventudes Libertarias 2001: 109-110). [Bolivia, January-February 2003] Income tax hike announced as part of a package to reduce public deficit to get access to IMF support. Clashes left more than thirty dead (Bretton Woods Update 2003: 3).

The Indonesian government has been at war in Aceh for 27 years, with more than 5,000 civilian deaths since the conflict began.... On ... June 21<sup>st</sup> [2003], members of GAM [the Aceh independence movement] were gunned down.... [I]n 2002 [the UK Labour government] ... announced a 20-fold increase in arms sales to Indonesia since 2000 – from £2m to nearly £41m.... Aceh, like East Timor, is extremely rich in resources ... and Exxon-Mobil control most of their oil and gas fields (Schnews 2003a; also Barnett 2003).

Tony Blair has pledged to do “everything we can to help” a 12-year-old Iraqi orphan, Ali Ismail Abbas, who lost both arms [and his parents] when his home in Baghdad was bombed [so *this* is how we disarm Iraq] (Woolf 2003). The country holds the second-biggest proven crude reserves after Saudi Arabia and has only developed 15 of its 73 identified oil fields (Associated Press 2004). President Bush has issued an Executive Order [13303], so far completely unreported, that purports to grant broad legal immunity to oil companies operating in Iraq. ... Under this Order, an oil company complicit in human rights violations, or one that causes environmental damage, would be immune from lawsuits (EarthRights International 2003; also see Federal Register 2003).

One in three people in the world will live in slums within 30 years ..., according to a UN report.... people are encouraged to move to the cities by factors including the privatisation of public services, job losses, and the removal of subsidies ... (Vidal 2003).

A British activist who fell 20 metres (65ft) from a motorway bridge during the protests against globalisation at the G8 summit last week intends to bring criminal charges against the Swiss police officer he blames for his fall. Martin Shaw, 39, from west London, was hanging from a rope during a blockade of the bridge over the river Aubonne, near Lausanne, when the policeman cut the rope (Millar and Langley 2003).

At the G8 summit in Genoa, 2001, 310 arrests were made, 560 protesters were injured, two ended up in a coma, one was killed. On the evening of 21<sup>st</sup> July *carabinieri* police attacked protesters staying at a school organised as sleeping space by the Genoa Social Forum. Sixty-two people were injured, of which 25% required continual medical observation for up to 5 days, 36% for 6-10 days, 11% for 18 days, 18% for 21-40 days and 5% over the long-term. Prime Minister Berlusconi had instructed police to 'use whatever force necessary' to control protesters (data from Indymedia 2002). Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi has sent units of armed carabinieri police to Iraq as a sign of his support for George Bush. The man commanding the units is General Leonardo Leso. He has been promoted in thanks for his great work in his previous job. Leso was one of an elite officer group in the carabinieri which played a key role in orchestrating the savage attack on the G8 anti-capitalist demonstration in Genoa two years ago (Socialist Worker 2003).

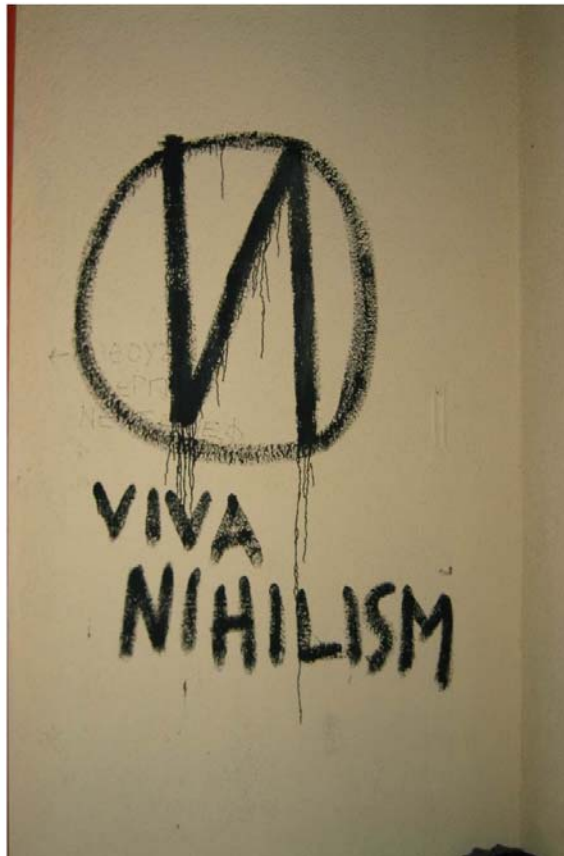
[Miami, November 2003, protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)]: Thousands of militarised police, in full riot gear, armed with everything from tear gas, rubber bullets and bean bags, electrified shields, tanks, water cannons, automatic and semi-automatic weapons, were busy violently arresting peaceful demonstrators, in some case with tasers<sup>1</sup>, in others at gunpoint. Busses filled with union members were prevented from joining permitted marches; human rights activists had guns pointed at their heads in military-style checkpoints. Embedded journalists similar to those used in Iraq meant that any independent ones were attacked, arrested and had cameras stolen.... Those in prison reported sexual assaults and beatings with two men locked in small dog-kennel size cages and sprayed with freezing water and pepper spray. 125 were injured, and a Centre looking after those injured was itself attacked by the robocops. One doctor remarked, "I've worked in emergency rooms, but this is really some of the worst onslaught of injuries I have ever seen." (Schnews 2003b; also Scahill 2003; Starhawk 2003a).

The Pentagon is planning a new generation of weapons, including huge hypersonic drones and bombs dropped from space, that will allow the US to strike its enemies at lightning speed from its own territory (Borger 2003).

### **A starting point: protests against the EU summit in Thessaloniki, June 2003**

Anti-capitalist rioters and Greek police were in an uneasy stand-off last night in Thessaloniki after a day of street battles that marred the end of the European Union summit (Howden 2003).

In June 2003 I was present at the EU ‘counter-summit’ in Thessaloniki. Like the metropolitan meetings of the G8, the WTO and other international political and financial institutions, the EU summits in recent years have seen vociferous protests by participants of the amorphous but burgeoning global ‘(anti-)globalisation movement(s)’ (see inset 1). Prior to the main day of protests on 21<sup>st</sup> June, the last day of the summit, I spent several hours in Thessaloniki’s Aristotle University campus, where squatting militant activists were taking advantage of the legal asylum granted on university premises. Here, in a philosophy department strewn with somewhat nihilistic graffiti (‘peace, love and petrol bombs’, ‘from pigs to bacon’, ‘middle class war’, ‘fuck the world, destroy everything’ (Plate 1)) glass bottles were being transformed into molotovs, gas masks were being tried on, and ‘anti-authoritarians’ were calmly anticipating one of ‘the biggest riots Thessaloniki has ever seen’. Several hours later, after the militants met with the main marches of the Greek Social Forum and the Communist Party of Greece (Plate 2) and, of course, the Greek riot police, the streets of Thessaloniki were thick with tear gas, several businesses were gutted and blackened with the soot from petrol bombs, and pools of blood were noticeable on the tarmac (Plates 3a and b).



*Plate 1. ‘Viva nihilism!’ – graffiti on the walls of the Philosophy Department at Thessaloniki’s Aristotle University (personal archive).*



*Plate 2. March on Tsimiski Street, Thessaloniki, organised by the Communist Party of Greece as part of the National Day of demonstrations on 21 June 2003 against the EU summit. The Greek Social Forum marched from east to west along Egnatia to meet the Open Assembly of Anarchists and Anti-Authoritarians who moved from the squatted Aristotle University to meet them (and the riot police) at Aristotelous Square (for a map of the city go to Citymap Thessaloniki 2003). Source: La Haine 2003.*

#### **Inset 1. On labelling ‘the movement’**

The term ‘anti-globalisation’ is problematic for several reasons. For example, ‘the movement’ draws on and is potentiated by the same processes and technologies that have made contemporary globalisation phenomena possible (cf. Sullivan forthcoming a). This, together with the movements’ support for ‘the effacement of borders and the free movement of people, possessions and ideas’ suggest that we should talk more properly of the ‘globalisation movement’ (Graeber 2002: 63), hence my bracketing here of ‘anti-’. Political scientist-activist Tadzio Mueller (2002, 2003) describes ‘the movement’ more accurately as the ‘globalisation-critical movement’, while Chesters (2003) refers to the ‘alternative globalization movement’. Further, an emphasising of ‘the movement’ as merely reactionary (i.e. ‘anti’) (e.g. Williamson 2003) acts as a smokescreen for what protagonists actually may be campaigning and motivating *for*, such that much media and other analysis becomes dislocated from the discourses and practices emerging within, and constructing, ‘the movements’. Following artist-activist John Jordan (pers. comm.), I pluralise *movements* to reflect the reality of diversity and difference among the collectives that are contesting the status quo worldwide, and the equally diverse and situated imaginings and practices for socio-political change that they embody (as captured in the title of Paul Kingsnorth’s (2003) recent book *One No, Many Yeses*). This also is intended as a conscious rhetorical and conceptual shift away from modernity’s constant drive towards the singular, towards the root or deep structure of things (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1988(1980): 3-25).





*Plate 3. a. Protester throwing a Molotov cocktail, and b. Greek police against a burning building, on Egnatia Street, Thessaloniki, during the anti-authoritarian action against the EU summit on 21 June 2003. Source: La Haine 2003.*

A campaign against the June 2003 EU summit meetings in Thessaloniki had been planned for over a year, to register popular protest against ‘the anti-peoples’ orientation of the European Union during the Greek presidency of the EU’, and to organise a ‘counter-summit’ to coincide with the EU meeting (e.g. Yechury 2003: 1; PAME 2002). The protests were staged as a manifestation of the ‘democratic deficit’ of the EU (cf. Habermas 2001: 14), i.e. whereby citizens do not feel represented by, or able to participate in, decisions made by those



comprising the decision-making structures of the Union. Particular concerns revolve around: spending on security; the increase of citizen surveillance and perceived detrimental effects on civil liberties; the use of the Schengen agreement<sup>2</sup> to restrict movement by immigrants and protesters, thereby contributing to ‘fortress Europe’; the favourable stance of the EU towards the production and trade of genetically modified products that a citizen majority appears to be vehemently opposed to<sup>3</sup>; and a general perception that the EU is oriented towards economic efficiency and comparative advantage for business and finance rather than the democratic and welfare concerns of its citizenry (e.g. Habermas 2001; Action Thessaloniki 2003; Antiauthoritarian Movement Salonika 2003; Greek Social Forum 2003; PAME 2003; Thessaloniki Prisoner Support 2003a; Thessaloniki Resistance 2003). Anger regarding EU involvement in recent military conflicts is indicated in the following statement that: ‘no European ... can ignore the fact that the EU participated in the massacre of the Yugoslav people; participated in the US war against Afghanistan; took part in the massacre of the Iraqi people, some governments openly and others providing facilities; and the prolonging of the agony of the Palestinian people by supporting the US-Israeli axis’ (Yechury 2003: 2).

Protest actions took place throughout the summit (20-22 June). These included demonstrations within Thessaloniki on the 19<sup>th</sup> to highlight the treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers to the EU<sup>4</sup>, a blockade and demonstration on the 20<sup>th</sup> in Chaldiki where the meeting was actually situated, and a large popular protest march within Thessaloniki on the 21<sup>st</sup> (IMC-Thessaloniki 2003). Estimates of the numbers participating in the protests on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> range from 25,000 to 100,000, with from 200 to 4,000-5,000 antiauthoritarians comprising the militant action (figures from Kambas and Pangalos (Reuters) 2003 and Christina 2003 respectively). My perception is that the total number of people on the march was fewer than 100,000 but greater than 25,000, and that the numbers participating in the antiauthoritarian action were definitely upwards of a thousand (the Open Assembly of Anarchists and Anti-Authoritarians (2003) estimates numbers to have been around 4,000).

In the antiauthoritarian action a McDonald’s and a Vodafone store were targeted with petrol bombs and completely gutted (Plates 4a and b), and around 30 shops as well as three Greek banks were damaged (Kambas and Pangalos 2003; pers. obs.). Greece deployed some 16,000 troops and police in the city and region to protect the summit from protesters, and on the 21<sup>st</sup> riot police used baton charges and large amounts of teargas to clear the central area of the city of protesters (Kambas and Pangalos 2003). Over one hundred people were arrested and,

although most were released without charge, 20 were held for up to three days before being released on bail (Thessaloniki Prisoners Support 2003b; Thessaloniki Prisoners Support 2003c). Eight demonstrators (2 Spaniards, 1 Syrian, 1 Briton, 1 American, and 3 Greeks) were imprisoned having been refused bail, with reports of violent treatment and with good photographic and video material to suggest that ‘evidence’ was planted on them by the police to support their conviction (Thessaloniki Prisoners Support 2003d). They face sentences of between 7 to 25 years in prison for serious charges including rebellion against the state, possession and use of explosives and arson.



**Plate 4.** Although a number of small, independent businesses were affected by the antiauthoritarian action in Thessaloniki on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2003, international corporate targets – perceived as both symbolic and direct representations of a world political-economic system of injustices and constraints – were subject to the greatest damage. 4a shows the burnt out McDonalds on Egnatia Street (source: Callewaert 2003) and 4b. is of a nearby Vodafone store (personal archive).

ET3, a Greek TV-station, has shown footage of Greek police planting molotov cocktails and other incriminating items on UK activist Simon Chapman (Plates 5a and b), one of the 8 remaining prisoners (footage available for viewing at IMC-Italy 2003a). Simon Chapman's experience of the action and his arrest is detailed below in a section from a letter by him:

I'm not sure if people know what happened before/after my arrest so I'll quickly outline it here. The march set off in militant style and soon the air was filled with the sound of breaking glass. The first gas came in and in the crowd surge I lost sight of X. Me, A and B continued on to a square where the gas started raining down - so far my goggles and half-face gas mask were working fine. The crowd surged again and I lost A and B, so I headed over to the rest of my affinity group. We ended up all squashed together with maybe 600 people, with clouds of gas coming from front and back, and my skin was starting to burn, my eyes were streaming. The crowd was all crushed together, people wailing for water for their eyes, pushing this way and that. Though I knew the safest place in that type of situation was in the middle of the crowd, I decided to go to the edge to see if I could see X, A & B. Then a huge cloud of gas enveloped me and I couldn't see a thing. So I'm at the edge choking, blind, on the edge of panic - a voice inside me is saying "be cool, be cool" and I kept it together. And then CRUNCH - everything went black and sparks of light shone in the darkness. At first I thought a badly aimed brick had hit me, but only a second later there was another bone-crunching blow to my head and I knew it was cops. I go to run but I'm already falling, scrabbling along the wall through broken glass, still blinded by gas; as I move the batons are raining down, sometimes 3 or 4 hitting simultaneously across my body. I feel boots kicking me as well. I thought I could crawl back to the crowd, but when I look up all I see is an empty smoky street and cop boots coming towards my face. BANG goes my goggles and glasses, and I realise I am in deep, deep shit. I try to get up but at that moment a hand comes down and pulls my cap and gas mask off and a final blow smacks me where my hair meets my forehead; I feel a splash of blood run down my face and everything goes black. I was only unconscious for a few seconds I think. I'm dragged to my feet, and boots and batons are still coming, mainly at my shoulders and legs. 5 cops have hold of me, dragging my rucksack off my back. They hold me and search it, then take me to the side of the road and sit me down. A cop comes up behind me and smacks me across the back with his baton, then kicks me at the base of the spine. This STILL hurts! My face is a sea of blood - I can feel it leaking from several places, running down my neck. C and D would have seen what happens next, the cops bringing the bags of molotovs to me. I can feel a fit-up coming on!

The next 2 hours are truly terrifying - I am cuffed with 2 bags of molotovs strapped to me. Some are leaking. The cops lead me into the road where rocks and molotovs are landing among us and present me to the rioters like I am a trophy. If one of these molotovs lands too close to me I would be a ball of flames faster than you could say "human rights". Over the next 2 hours I am beaten with batons, fists, a hammer; wacked (*sic*) across the head twice with a length of wood, headbutted, kicked, slapped and constantly exposed to teargas. I could hardly walk or breathe. The whole left side of my back was purple, yellow, black, blue and I was covered in cuts, bruises and lumps. So it was quite rough! I never thought I would be so glad to finally get stuffed - well kicked - in a cell where 10 other demonstrators were languishing! (Support Simon Chapman 2003a).



*Plate 5. UK activist Simon Chapman being beaten by Greek police Egnatia Street, Thessaloniki, during the anti-authoritarian action against the EU summit, 21 June 2003. 5a. shows Simon wearing his blue rucksack, while 5b. taken later, shows that his blue rucksack has been removed and a black rucksack, containing molotovs as well as an axe and hammer as evidence, has been positioned next to him. Footage from the Greek TV station ET3 demonstrates that this was put there by the police. Simon, together with 7 other activists, faces a prison sentence of between 7-25 years if found guilty as charged. Sources: a. La Haine 2003; b. REUTERS/Yannis Behrakis 2003.*

The protests at Thessaloniki linger on in the form of prisoner solidarity for those who await charge, who, judging by the strong evidence suggesting that they were ‘fitted up’ for the serious charges made against them, clearly are being scapegoated for actions that involved somewhere in the region of 1,000-4,000 people<sup>5</sup>. Prisoner solidarity actions have taken place in a number of countries, including Britain, Greece, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Italy and Australia, on the principle among protesters that ‘[t]hey’re inside for us. We’re outside for them’ (WOMBLES<sup>6</sup> 2003a; Support Simon Chapman 2003b). Early in July 2003 the bank account that had been opened in Greece to receive funds in support of prisoner solidarity was frozen by the Greek government (Thessaloniki Prisoners Support 2003e). By September their situation was looking so precarious that five of the prisoners went on hunger strike. After considerable prisoner solidarity efforts, and with the prisoner hunger strike reaching between 49 and 66 days, Simon and the other prisoners were eventually released on 26 November, on condition that they remain in Greece until their trial (IMC-UK 2003a). In December, Simon was greeted with the dual bad news of the death of his father from leukaemia whilst he was in Thessaloniki, and of the decision by the prosecutor to close the inquiry against the police who planted evidence - saying that ‘the video [that was aired live that day, June 21st, by a state-owned television channel] and the photos, were all “made up”’, and that ‘Simon Chapman was injured as he was trying to escape’ (IMC-UK 2003b).

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Having set a scene of multiple contexts and expressions of violence, my aims in the remaining sections of this essay, are 1. to explore the suggestion that consciously militant tactics - namely violence to property and preparedness for confrontation with police - are gaining legitimacy amongst protesters in global anticapitalist politics; 2. to attempt a nuanced and contextual analysis of *why* this is the case, beyond a simplistic and moralistic framing of whether such tactics are strategically ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for ‘the movements’; and 3. to offer some critique of the processes and acts engendered by militant ‘anti-capitalist’ practice. My conceptual approach is more bricolage than purist. Throughout the piece I draw on the explanatory frames of contemporary post-anarchist, post-structuralist, bio-political and complex systems theories of organisation, power and resistance, an antipsychiatry stance that resonates with R.D. Laing, and embodiment approaches to understanding subjective experience. In particular, and following postanarchist theorist Saul Newman (2000: 1-2), I argue that much militant practice in anti-capitalist politics constitutes a proactive political stance that deserves to be distinguished from what critics, from Lenin to Nietzsche, have vehemently dismissed as a

reactive anarchist politics of *ressentiment* – as ‘the spiteful politics of the weak and pitiful, the morality of the slave’; the ‘vengeful *will to power* of the powerless over the powerful’. My ‘data’ derive from ‘observant participation’ in relevant activist contexts (cf. Goaman ?; Plows 2002); discourse analysis, focusing on unpublished and independently published texts and transcripts that together indicate themes and ideas influencing contemporary anti-capitalist practice; and reflection on, and validation of, my own subjective and embodied experience/s.

### **Discourses, practices, of destruction: violence and the (anti-)globalisation movement(s)**

Violence as a tactic of protest is as old as there has been contested authority. But if it is possible to talk of the emergence of a *new* global social movement that is challenging the current status quo of inequalities, then I think it is also possible to perceive a globalisation of proactively militant discourse and practice - in both the ‘plateaux’ (cf. Chesters 2003 after Deleuze and Guattari 1987(1980)) of key mobilisations, and in the ongoing direct action politics of the alternative globalisation/global justice movements. By this I refer to a trans-nationally understood and practised tactics of both symbolic violence to property and preparedness for direct confrontation with police<sup>7</sup>. With the property damage and the violent clashes that have occurred between police and ‘anti-capitalist’ protesters at significant protest events in the post-industrial north in recent years<sup>8</sup>, violence now is expected in these contexts<sup>9</sup>. One author, for example, refers to ‘the habitual violence at anti-globalisation rallies’ (Toje 2002: 3). Policing strategies and the corporate media both reflect *and create* these expectations and actualities<sup>10</sup>, and techniques for crowd control now comprise a major focus for military and police, as well as an economic boom industry for the manufacturers of a whole new wave of crowd control weaponry (see inset 2). The smashing of property and the violent articulation of police and protesters described above for the EU summit in Thessaloniki thus is part and parcel of a conscious and growing orientation towards combative strategies amongst protesters associated with the ‘(anti-)globalisation movement(s)’ in the post-industrial north.

#### **Inset 2. ‘Non-lethal’ weapons and the militarisation of protest policing**

For the policing of protests against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) meeting in November 2003, ‘... Miami police had managed to get \$8.5 million earmarked for Iraq, to spend on “non-lethal” weapons’ (Schnews 2003b; also Scahill 2003; Starhawk 2003b). What are these ‘non-lethal’ weapons, and what does their deployment signify for civil liberties and the practice of protest?

These weapons represent a shift from those that impact on ‘the target’ with something material – bullets, mines, foam impregnated with tear-gas, etc. – to those that use non-visible directed energy-



waves such as lasers, soundwaves and microwaves. The mid-1990s state-of-the-art crowd control included weapons such as the following (from DefenseLink 1995: 2-5, 7):

- stinger grenades.* A grenade containing rubber pellets that cause stinging and bruising when thrown into a crowd. Can cause much more serious injuries at close range.
- projectiles.* Including rubber pellets and wooden batons. Designed to be fired down at the ground by grenade launchers or shotguns, such that the projectiles ricochet off the ground and into the legs of people in a crowd. Also 'bean bags' filled with lead munitions (Toje 2002: 3). Fatal if fired at close range.
- foam barriers laced with tear gas.* Launched from a large water and foam dispensing tank to cover an area around 200 by 20 feet.
- sticky foam.* Dispensed from a small high-pressure gun system and designed to restrict peoples' movement. Difficult to remove, as indicated by US Department of Defense (DoD) spokesman in the following statement: '... it's a very lengthy process to get it off yourself but what the heck, they've got lots of time you know (laughter)'.

Today's existing and emerging 'non-lethal', directed-energy, 'Playstation' weapons have been envisioned and developed in a collaborative relationship between science fiction writers, futurologists and high-profile CIA and military personnel (as named in Wright 1999: 2). Since 9/11/01, the US has been urged by senior army personnel to speed up their development 'to stay ahead of potential enemies' (in Book 2002: 2), as well as to respond to the increasing incidents of military operations in urban terrain (Lackey 2002). The weapons include:

- lasers.* Small chemical lasers can semi-blind the target/person and/or induce electrical shocks that paralyse muscles to the extent that they can kill by causing the heart to stop beating (Mulholland 1999: 1). The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) uses a laser gun to temporarily semi-blind human targets (Toje 2002). At a different scale, the advantage to the military of lasers for uses varying from ground combat to destroying intercontinental ballistic missiles lies in their 'low cost per kill' (in Erwin 2001: 2).

- acoustic bio-effect weapons.* As described by a US military expert in Wright (1999: 4), these can be 'merely annoying', causing 'disorientation, pain and nausea' (Ottawa Citizen 2001: 2), or 'can be tuned to produce 170 decibels and rupture organs, create cavities in human tissue and cause potentially lethal blastwave trauma'. Nice.

- electro-magnetic energy weapons. otherwise known as microwave weapons or 'the people zapper'.* These are the *pièce de resistance* of new-wave 'crowd-control' technologies. When launched as part of a Vehicle-Mounted Active Denial System (VMADS) they fire directed energy at human targets to a range upwards of 750m (Sirak 2001; Brinkley 2001; Renn 2001; Castellon and Brinkley 2003). Wright (1999: 4) reports that video footage was shown at the 1998 Jane's Defence conference in London of medical staff treating the comatose victims of microwave weapons. They have been described as 'uniquely intrusive', with the potential to disorientate and upset mental stability as well as affect the body's normal regulatory functions. At high levels they simply cook flesh, in the same way as a microwave oven cooks chicken: '[t]he amount of time the weapon must be trained on an individual to cause permanent damage or death is classified' (Brinkley 2001; 1). Prior to the 2003 war on Iraq, numerous periodicals and newspapers reported the expected use of these weapons in an attack on Iraq (e.g. Fulghum 2002). It is unclear whether or not these weapons were indeed used in Iraq.

#### **Issues:**

*Lethality:* The tem 'non-lethal' is misleading. As described by a senior US military official, 'it's really a less lethal way because these weapons if improperly used could be lethal' (DefenseLink 1995: 1). Further, the 'new generation' of energy-wave weapons are mostly designed as dual-use weapons (Toje 2002), such that they become explicitly lethal at the flick of a switch. And, by immobilising people *in situ*, they create vulnerable sitting ducks of recipients (cf. Wright 1999: 5). Since research into the health impacts of directed energy weapons is being done by the those developing the weapons (cf. Anon. 2001a: 2), and since all information related to this weaponry is highly classified, it seems unlikely that good information will find its way into the public domain so that citizens can both inform and protect themselves.



*Are 'the weapon-makers ... shaping US foreign policy'* (Wright 1999: 1)? In 1999, the total US military budget was \$260bn, i.e. 'already twice as large as the combined budgets of every conceivable US adversary' (William Hartmung, Senior Research Fellow, US Policy Institute, quoted in Wright 1999: 1). As Wright (1999: 1) asserts, this excessive spending only makes sense with the consideration that 'the weapon-makers are shaping US foreign policy', an effort assisted since 2001 by the amorphous US-led global 'war on terror'. And who are the weapon-makers? They are private companies contracted to the military and the police (cf. DefenseLink 1995: 6; Brinkley 2001: 4). Thus, despite the highly classified nature of most 'new-wave' non-lethal weapons, these have spawned a range of highly lucrative commercial contracts whose interests clearly are linked to making profits, and to enhancing and servicing demand, possibly discounting where this demand comes from (cf. Wright 1999: 3, 5).

*(II)legality:* Many of these new-wave weapons are not covered by international law Toje 2002: 1). Plus some developments of crowd 'calmatives' are now known to be a resurrected or continued US programme for developing incapacitating chemicals called ARCAD (Advanced Riot Control Agent Device), supposedly discontinued in 1992 because it contravened the Chemical Weapons Convention of that year (Sunshine Project 2004). Following the lead taken by the International Red Cross the European parliament called for a ban on blinding laser weapons in January 1999 (Wright 1999: 4), but international ratification of this treaty has been slow and these weapons remain in use (Toje 2002: 4).

*Militarisation of policing:* Inter-penetration of police and military operations is growing and the style of policing protests has become increasingly militarised, even down to the use of embedded journalists as providers of 'legitimate' news reports of protests (Scahill 2003).

An activist's comment: '... dreaming up and actualising these things surely can only be the province of sick and dehumanised minds. And yet we are being governed and managed by these same brains. Some of us find our own selves to be policed, medicated and treated as abnormal by the same society that accepts these technological developments as simply business as usual. Is it any wonder that we howl, we smash, in disbelief and anger?' (Sam, personal notes).

The financial costs of policing protest events, as well as the costs of damage to property and of lost business, provide a conventional measure of the significance of confrontational practices in these contexts<sup>11</sup>. But a look at the published and unpublished expressions of intent made by antiauthoritarian protesters confirms a transnational strategic militancy in contemporary (anti-)globalisation protest politics. In the post-industrial north, it is not difficult to find calls for the *destruction* of existing institutions as a legitimate and necessary response to the destructive tendencies and practices that in turn are identified with these institutions. Together, these comprise a coherent and combative discourse of destruction. Take, for example, the following statements from various zines, pamphlets and websites of antiauthoritarian activists in the post-industrial 'north' (emphasis added in all cases):

*We want to destroy government and rich peoples' privileges.* We want to get rid of the control that police, government and bosses have over our everyday lives. We want workers to control their own workplaces and see ordinary people run the world together without money, hierarchies or authority. This is what we call 'Anarchy'.... *Their power must be taken from them by force....* they have the police to beat us up, the prisons to lock us up, the military to shoot us, the schools and the corporate media to fool us.... changing our

ideas is not enough. *Capitalism must be fought in the streets* (Anarchist Youth Network: Britain and Ireland 2003)<sup>12</sup>.

[T]he technological system that we know is itself part of the structures of domination. It was created to more efficiently control those exploited by capital. Like the state, like capital itself, *this technological system will need to be destroyed* in order for us to take back our lives (Willful Disobedience n.d. a).

[T]he state will not merely wither away, thus *anarchists must attack*, for waiting is defeat; *what is needed is open mutiny* and the spreading of subversion among the exploited and excluded (Killing King Abacus 2001: 1).

[W]hile the industrial system is sick *we must destroy it*. If we compromise with it and let it recover from its sickness, it will eventually wipe out all of our freedom (Kaczynski 2002 (1995): 37).

May the barbarians break loose. May they sharpen their swords, may they brandish their battleaxes, may they strike their enemies without pity. May hatred take the place of tolerance, may fury take the place of resignation, may outrage take the place of respect. May the barbarian hordes go to the assault, autonomously, in the way that they determine. And may no parliament, no credit institution, no supermarket, no barracks, no factory ever grow again after their passage (Crisso and Odoteo 2003: 6).

There's no excuse to let a fraction of our lives go by doing things we don't love, or to let any of our talents and effort serve to prop up a world order we oppose. Instead, *let's fight so hard*, and live so hard, that others inside the cages of mainstream life can see us and are inspired to join us in *our complete rejection of the old world* and all its bullshit (CrimethInc. Workers' Collective 2001: 165).

[I]t is precisely when people know that they no longer have anything to say to their rulers, that they may learn how to talk with each other. It is precisely when people know that the possibilities of this world can offer them nothing that they may learn how to dream the impossible. The network of institutions that dominate our life, this civilization, has turned our world into a toxic prison. *There is so much to be destroyed* so that a free existence may be created. The time of the barbarians is at hand (Wildfire 2003a).

One of the world's biggest ever trade fairs for guns, bombs, military planes & ships, small arms, mines and tanks is scheduled to take place in London from 9 - 12 September 2003.... *You are invited to help destroy this market of death ...* (Destroy DSEi 2003).

[W]e, as insurrectionists *must wage war on terror*: the terror of the state, the terror of hierarchy, the terror of war and most importantly the terror of civilization (Wildfire 2003b).

This is an *honest* and open discourse of destruction - transmuted into practice in the context of protests and direct action activism, and which attempts to challenge directly the state's assumed and masked monopoly over the legitimacy of the use of destructive practices to further defined aims. It clearly positions antiauthoritarian activists of many flavours – anarcho-primitivists, insurrectionists, CrimethInc. dropout culturists, to name a few represented by the sources of the texts – as separated by a qualitative abyss from the 'pathological passivity' (Roszak 1971(1968): 22; Churchill *et al.* 1998) of agendas that, whilst critical of the status quo,

seek to reform existing institutions and structures rather than imagine some sort of disaffiliation, or even rupture, from them. It also decries the detachment from anger of associated spiritually-oriented positions. For many, these constitute inappropriate stances towards effecting exterior change through assuming that by addressing first-order alienations (between subject-object, nature-culture), the violations effected by second order alienations (e.g. private property, the division of labour, and alienated power) will simply be transcended or slip away (cf. Willful Disobedience n.d. b; Mindell 1995). Assuming a 'spiritual rank' (Mindell 1995: 62-63) or high ground that delegitimises the potential for consciously articulated anger to energise transformative action, thereby becomes as helpful as its mirror attitude - that of denying the role/s of individual and collective spirituality in aiding an envisioning of societal alternatives that support rather than constrain healthy human experience.

An argument common both within and without 'the movement(s)' is that violence perpetuated (against property and police) by advocates of a militant anti-capitalist politics is a fringe element that discredits and delegitimises 'the movement' as a whole (also noted in Cross 2002: 11). Media and popular attention has focused particularly on the apparently mysterious and shadowy 'black bloc' - demonised and misrepresented as the dark underbelly of alienated anti-capitalist youth (e.g. in Watson 2003; see inset 3). While appealing to the voyeuristic tendencies of the media and thereby at least drawing attention to the incident of protest – i.e. 'no fights, no coverage' (Broughton 2003) – violence is framed as distracting focus from issues that activists are protesting against and for, and as a strategy that is divisive for 'the movement(s)' as a whole. As Yechury (2003: 3) writes with regard to the EU summit protests in Thessaloniki, 'the anarchist action was the centre of media attention, and pictures of looting and arson characterised the protest on TV throughout Europe. The harder, sober and strongly felt anti-globalisation debate was hijacked for the evening'. Similarly, with reference to actions at Lausanne during the G8 summit, also in June 2003, the Swiss newspaper 'Le Matin' proclaimed in a blood-red headline that 'the black blocks destroyed the dream of the pacifists' (in WOMBLES 2003b: 32). For others, there is little difference between violence at a protest and riots at a football match, the violent act in both contexts being low on instrumental strategy and high on cathartic release and momentary self-indulgent expression.

### Inset 3. Black bloc – a tactics

I recognise that it is as inappropriate to use a box to talk about ‘the black bloc’ as it is to imply that there is such a thing as ‘the’ black bloc in the sense of a defined ‘group’ with a defined ‘membership’. For this same reason, I eschew the use of title-case when speaking of the Black Bloc, as it seems to me that this also implies fixity and reification of what in ideal terms appears conceived as a fluid and contextual tactics, aspiring towards non-hierarchical and de-centralised organisation, and accessible to any who choose these terms of engagement.

The name ‘black bloc’ comes from the term ‘Schwarze Bloc’ used by German police in the 1980s to describe squatters and Autonomen who employed militant tactics in their efforts to retain occupied properties (Indymedia 2002; Infoshop 2003). Although generally perceived as ‘anarchists’, in continental Europe, where a strong centrally-organised left tradition remains a political *tour de force*, a black bloc on a protest might incorporate militant members of worker-oriented parties as well as anti-imperialist nationalists (cf. Anon. in press). In America, a black bloc first occurred during the Gulf War protests in 1991 (Infoshop 2003), and there is a sense in which a black bloc tactics here has taken on a coherence of its own that makes sense in a context with a limited left politics. Thus, ‘[a] Black Bloc is a collection of anarchists and anarchist affinity groups that organize together for a particular protest action. The flavor of the Black Bloc changes from action to action, but the main goals are to provide solidarity in the face of a repressive police state and to convey an anarchist critique of whatever is being protested that day ... Black is worn as the colour that symbolises anarchism, to indicate solidarity and to provide anonymity’ (Infoshop 2003). Masking up is both a nod towards the Zapatista practice of masking so as to avoid the reification of individuals and leaders, and a means of exploiting the possibilities of clandestinity in a system perceived as protecting clandestine, behind-closed-doors, decision-making processes by the few on behalf of the many, as well as on eroding individual liberty (cf. Notes From Nowhere 2003: 303-315).

The black bloc socio-political critique takes the form drawing attention to capital’s omnipresent symbols by targeting them with destructive actions. After an action, these frequently are communicated and explained via Indymedia and other websites where the tactics are debated and are also subject to critique. The following communiqué, for example, describes some black bloc actions that occurred during the protests that closed the WTO summit in Seattle, November 1999:

On November 30, several groups of individuals in black bloc attacked various corporate targets in downtown Seattle. Among them were (to name just a few):

**Fidelity Investment** (major investor in Occidental Petroleum, the bane of the U’wa tribe in Columbia)

**Bank of America, US Bancorp, Key Bank and Washington Mutual Bank** (financial institutions key in the expansion of corporate repression)

**Old Navy, Banana Republic and the GAP** (as Fisher family businesses, rapers of Northwest forest lands and sweatshop laborers)

**NikeTown and Levi’s** (whose overpriced products are made in sweatshops)

**McDonald’s** (slave-wage fast-food peddlers responsible for destruction of tropical rainforests for grazing land and slaughter of animals)

**Starbucks** (peddlers of an addictive substance whose products are harvested at below-poverty wages by farmers who are forced to destroy their own forests in the process)

**Warner Bros.** (media monopolists)

**Planet Hollywood** (for being Planet Hollywood)

This activity lasted for over 5 hours and involved the breaking of storefront windows and doors and defacing of facades. Slingshots, newspaper boxes, sledge hammers, mallets, crowbars and nail-pullers were used to strategically destroy corporate property and gain access (one of the three targeted Starbucks and Niketown were looted). Eggs filled with glass etching solution, paint-balls and spray-paint were also used (ACME Collective 1999).

Given the pluralistic and multifaceted social context of the (anti-)globalisation movements - with their rhetorical emphasis on 'unity in diversity' - all of these critical views have legitimacy. Their dismissal of militant practices, however, masks several dimensions pertinent for a nuanced analysis of both the occurrence of violence *within* protest events, and the relationship of violence in these contexts to the wider socio-political milieux in which they take place.

As some of the quotes that open this piece allude to, we inhabit a global economic and political system that is built on, pervaded with and powered by gut-wrenching levels of physical and psychological violence. Bourgois (2001: 7), following Galtung (1969), asserts that the contemporary world (dis)order is infused with *structural violence* such that '... the political-economic organization of society ... imposes conditions of physical and emotional distress ... rooted, at the macro-level, in structures such as unequal [i.e. unfair] international terms of trade and ... expressed locally in exploitative labour markets, marketing arrangements and the monopolization of services'. At the same time, and as New York columnist Thomas Friedman wrote prior to the last Gulf war in 1991, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the hidden fist of the (US) military that has been behind the hidden hand of the 'free' market (in Cookson, n.d.; Higgott 2003)<sup>13</sup>; or the accompanying and increasingly militarised suppression of dissent and protest worldwide. Analytically, these constitute *political violence* (Bourgois 2001: 7): administered in the name of the political ideology of neoliberalism (what Graeber (2002: 62) refers to as 'market Stalinism'), in combination with an aggressive American unilateralism (cf. PNAC 1997; Donnelly 2000; The White House 2002; Higgott 2003)<sup>14</sup>.

Newman (2000) points out that for Marx the State's oppressive apparatus reflected economic exploitation and the desires of the empowered capitalist class, while for late 19th century anarchist writers such as Bakunin and Kropotkin, the State itself *originates* in and has a sustained logic of violence (cf. Perlman 1983). Today, it is tempting to see structural violence implicit in a strong collusion of both state and capitalist interests (for example, in today's social democratic adherence to the ideology of public-private partnerships) in combination with untouchable and state-supported arms-industries and the apparent use of military might to defend and expand economic interests. If this line of thought has meaning, then it is impossible not to connect it with Mussolini's understanding of fascism as 'corporatism' – 'the merger of state, military and corporate power' (quoted in Pilger 2004: 20). Or to envisage an emerging contemporary form of global corporatism that favours America as the world's largest capitalist

economy and military power, and in which the national state, to varying degrees, becomes an appendage of a combined and ongoing transnational and imperialist policing, military and economic effort (*viz* the presence of several national police forces in Switzerland and France for the purposes of protecting the G8 summit in Evian in June 2003, the global but US-led ‘War on terror’, the recent US-led but coalition-backed attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, the use of Italian *carabinieri* to train Iraqi police ...).

Böhm and Sørensen (2003: 2) conceive this ‘globality’ of violence as ‘*warganization*’: the biopolitical total war (cf. Arendt 1963; Foucault 1998 (1976); Deleuze and Guattari 1987 (1980)) ‘embedded in the very organisation of Empire’, indeed, *required* by the continual expansion of capitalism’s territory ‘geographically and socially, horizontally and vertically’ (cf. Hardt and Negri 2000). It signals the end of war as a bounded event – ‘where war is conceived as a limited enterprise in which you engage and disengage’ – and thereby also signals the end of a utopian imaginary of peace as a state of not war (Böhm and Sørensen 2003: 10). In these circumstances, *war* – war on terror, war on drugs, war on individual and civil liberties effected by the constructed paranoia of current surveillance culture and the securitisation of everyday life (cf. Sullivan forthcoming b) – becomes *the* ‘organizing principle that is constantly at play everywhere’ (Böhm and Sørensen 2003: 9). Ironically it is “sold” to us as a war for “freedom” (Böhm 2002: 329), or for peace - an irony embodied in the caustic peace slogan that ‘fighting for peace is like fucking for virginity’. Thus ‘the enemy is everywhere and everybody: ... “total war” is in fact a civil war in the sense that it is a war from *within* the social, *against* the social’ (Böhm 2002: 329, emphasis in original)<sup>15</sup>. From psychoanalytic and self-actualisation perspectives this total war is distributed more minutely throughout society in that it also is located throughout our selves and psyches. It is the ‘symbolic violence’ (Bourdieu (1998, 2001) absorbed by both individuals and collectives, that maintains hegemonic domination through the internalisation and legitimation of the categories making the social order appear self-evident - ‘producing the unwitting consent of the dominated’ (Bourgois 2001: 8). And it is thereby everpresent as the internal effort - the fight - required in any waking up to our contingent power and freedom, that makes possible an active consciousness and overcoming of the ‘regulated “interiorization”’ exacted by the corporate state (Newman 2000: 5 after Nietzsche).

An increasingly and globally connected-consciousness of the central and multiplicitous roles of violence to the creation and maintenance of global inequalities similarly is of emerging and

defining significance in contemporary (anti-)globalisation politics. This is powerfully indicated by the existence and inter-penetration of both an ‘anti-capitalist’ movement that is global in reach (as in *We Are Everywhere! Notes From Nowhere* 2003), with a global peace/anti-war movement that showed its presence in the streets on 15 February 2003 (e.g. Koch 2004), and is animating ongoing direct action politics as well as street protests worldwide. This understanding – that global patterns of inequality and injustice are established and perpetuated by systemically coercive and violent relationships in the realm of the social and the subjective, and therefore that political violence is not limited to the frontline of military conflict (cf. Sullivan 2003a) – is articulated in precise terms by militant protesters engaging in ‘anti-capitalist’ practice. Take, for example, the following quotes:

Violence is not only present when human beings do physical harm to each other. Violence is there, albeit in a subtler form, whenever they use force upon each other in their interactions. It is violence that is at the root of capitalism. Under the capitalist system, all the economic laws governing human life come down to coercion... (CrimethInc. Workers’ Collective 2001: 70).

The ASBB [Anti-Statist Black Bloc] advocates the building of an organized movement against corporate and state tyranny in America. We recognize that poor and working class people have lost control of their communities and individual lives. The Democratic and Republican parties clearly support social relations in which this is furthered. By supporting the death penalty, militarism, corporate welfare, and the cutting of social spending, ... they have proven to be political parties of profit over people as all parties have. By organizing black blocs and using direct action, we confront this intolerable and unacceptable system (ASBB 2000).

Private property--and capitalism, by extension--is intrinsically (*sic*) violent and repressive and cannot be reformed or mitigated. Whether the power of everyone is concentrated into the hands of a few corporate heads or diverted into a regulatory apparatus charged with mitigating the disasters of the latter, no one can be as free or as powerful as they could be in a non-hierarchical society (ACME Collective 1999).

We could never match the violence of society. The bottom line is, we live in a society where you have to fuck people over to achieve security for yourself (‘Joe’ in Thompson 2003).

Militancy in the movements emerges as a legitimate, predictable and *human* anger at the violence effected in order to maintain and extend a status quo of alienation and structural inequality. But this does not necessarily explain the passion and determination of those committed to militant activist practice. In the following sections of this essay I pursue three further aspects of this nexus of interrelationships, perceptions and practices: a consideration of relationships between depression, anger and activism; a disaggregation of differences between acting out and transforming the powerful emotion of anger; and some musings on the strategic



appropriateness of anger-fuelled violence, including some comments on relationships regarding gender and militancy.

**‘Thou shalt pretend there is nothing wrong’<sup>16</sup>**

Whether on the battlefield or in the home we are all constantly faced with the reality of war (the burnt battlefields littered with the dead and tortured) and we are all brutalized. We all lose our humanity whether through brutalizing the ‘enemy’ ourselves or watching the instant replay on our ‘entertainment’ units. We are all destroyed, everything broken ... (Wildfire 2003b).

The following is an oft-repeated experiment in hypnosis. The subject is hypnotized and told that an ice-cold bucket of water is lukewarm. He is told to put his arm in the bucket. The hypnotist says, “How does it feel?” “Fine.” “Is it uncomfortable at all?” “No, it’s nice and warm.” Then the subject is given paper and a pen and told to let his free hand write without thinking about anything at all, just letting it move by itself. The hand writes, “Stop the experiment! It hurts! It’s freezing!” Below the hypnotized level of consciousness there is always this aware observer.

This is the experiment we are now doing on a global scale. Media and advertising have hypnotized us to the materialist culture, while underneath there is a level of awareness screaming, “Stop the experiment! We are consuming a planet! This is insane!” It certainly helps to explain the pandemic of depression and violence and stress-related disease.... (Palter 2003).

What drives people crazy is trying to live outside reality.... The reality is pain ... But it’s the lies, the evasions of reality, that drive you crazy (Le Guin 1974: 138).

I know one bitingly articulate activist whose existential pain was so extreme that to shift it he would slash his own arms and torso to pieces. One cut required more than 80 stitches. At activist gatherings and mobilisation meetings I have seen the scars of physical self-laceration on more people than I care to remember. Others retreat into the temporary psychic cotton wool of drugs - from alcohol to ketamine. And who in the activist communities does not know of someone who has attempted or succeeded in suicide? All these are tools for pain management. *We are heartbroken and furious!* I mean, how many of us, and to what degree, do we have to be hurting before the reality of where we’re at collectively begins to sink in? (Sam, activist, personal notes).

I feel as if I am at a dead  
end and so I am finished  
All spiritual facts I realize  
are true but I never escape  
the feeling of being closed in ... (Ginsberg in Roszak 1971(1968): 130).

I would like so much to say that Prozac is preventing many people who are not clinically depressed from finding real antidotes ... but what exactly would those solutions be? ... Just as our parents quieted us when we were noisy by putting us in front of the television set, maybe we’re now learning to quiet our own adult noise with Prozac (Wurtzel 1999 (1994): 302).

Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy, then gives them the drugs to take away their unhappiness [whilst criminalising those who

consume substances not sanctioned by the state and produced in the formal economy].... Instead of removing the conditions that make people depressed, modern society gives them antidepressant drugs. In effect, antidepressants are a means of modifying an individual's internal state in such a way as to enable him [*sic*] to tolerate conditions that he would otherwise find intolerable (Kaczynski 2002 (1995): 39-40)<sup>17</sup>.

A focus on the internal problems for 'the movement(s)' generated by a growing militant presence among protesters in the post-industrial north both enhances sectarianism and deflects (perhaps somewhat conveniently) a more situated understanding of the emergence of proactive practices by activists in these contexts. Attempting this sort of analysis requires the asking of uncomfortable questions.

How do people cope with subjection to the incidence of intentional violence meted out around the world - the pornography of violence consumed daily via the mainstream news? What do people do in order to survive contexts experienced as traumatising and brutalising: from the direct violence of physical abuse; to the psychological stress of being examined, of working to make money for others, of mind-numbing petty bureaucracy and form-filling, of deadlines, dead ends, censorship and enclosed spaces? How do we maintain our legitimisation of the democratic state's monopoly on violence – violence that is meted out to dissenting citizens and used, directly or indirectly (e.g. through state-sanctioned trade in arms), to murder civilians in distant contexts? How do we accept the disembodied and arguably dehumanised edifice of the self-interested 'economic rational *man*' that bolsters many of the assumptions on which contemporary policy is based - translating nature into natural resources, social relationships into social capital, the death of civilians into collateral damage? Or the 'grizzly callousness of social Darwinism' (Roszak 1971(1968): 101); the insultingly formulaic reduction of human sensual, relational and creative experience to the unconscious self-interest of 'selfish genes', playing out their predictable competitive games in the 'survival machines' of our bodies (cf. Dawkins 1990; critiqued in Jensen 2000)? What happens when we can no longer maintain the pretence that the minutiae of consumptive possibilities available in late-modernity satisfy our human desires for participation, relationship, meaning and mystery?

Jensen (2000), among others, maintains that these contexts dehumanise by normalising brutality and shallowness, and are maintained through the silencing of outrage in relation to the trauma that this produces. The psychology and psychotherapy literature is rich with observations and experience of the ways in which humans and animals cope with extended

suffering and trauma, in both experimental and real world settings. A common pattern is to become desensitised to the repeated experience of, or exposure to, violence. This implies both the closing down or repression of instinctual *felt* responses to such exposure, and the construction of psychological and bodily barriers – ‘armour’ – in protection from the effects of this exposure (cf. Miller 2001 (1979): 100). Summarising experimental work on non-human animals (work that for many is itself indicative of dysfunction in its embodiment of the broken *Gestalt* (or wholeness) of human interrelationships with the non-human world), Pinkola Estes (1993: 244) states that, ‘... when a creature is exposed to violence, it will tend to adapt to that disturbance, so that when the violence ceases or the creature is allowed its freedom, the healthy instinct to flee is hugely diminished, and the creature stays put instead’. And for people, ‘[w]hen the instincts are injured, humans will “normalize” assault after assault, acts of injustice and destruction toward themselves, their offspring, their loved ones, their land, and even their Gods’ (Pinkola Estes 1993: 246). This is particularly true when people become ‘used to not being able to intervene in shocking events’ because of ‘formidable punishments for breaking silence, for fleeing the cage<sup>18</sup>, for pointing out wrongs, for demanding change’ (Pinkola Estes 1993: 246). Violence – *violation* – thus is normalised via *the denial or silencing of the healthy felt experience of violation*: ‘[r]ational, constructive action [in response to violation] depends not only on the intactness of our intellectual faculties, but also on the extent to which we have access to our true emotions (Pinkola Estes 1993: 238)<sup>19</sup>.

The injuring of instincts through violation thus tends to result in a depression or repression of healthy instinctual and experiential responses, and a suppression of the ability to act appropriately to transform the situation when or if this possibility presents itself. An outcome of alienating the self from the subjective experience of trauma, therefore, is depression, such that ‘[d]epression consists of a denial of one’s own emotional reactions ... in the service of an absolutely essential adaptation’ (Miller 2001 (1979): 46), i.e. to circumstances experienced as violating. The suite of symptoms accompanying depressive ‘illness’ become a means of deflecting – cutting off – healthy responses to painful circumstances. Such responses might include anger, outrage and the urge to escape. Indeed, one way of understanding depression is as repressed anger; anger that becomes turned inwards against the self in the lethargy of low self-esteem and self-denial, or the energy of self-harm practices, that accompany the experience of depression.

While not a new ‘disease’, depression or ‘melancholy’ as a category of ‘illness’ *has* increased dramatically in post-industrial society. In the early 1990s the results of a long-term, international and multi-generational study indicated that people born after 1955 were ‘*three times* as likely as their grandparents’ generation to suffer from depression’. Similar findings emerged for countries as disparate as Italy, Germany, Taiwan, Lebanon, Canada, France, Puerto Rico and New Zealand, suggesting that this trend is global in reach (figures reported in Wurtzel 1999 (1994); 298-299, emphasis in original). Also indicative of this trend is the rocketing numbers of prescriptions made for anti-depressant drugs in recent years, causing some commentators to describe this as a ‘legal drug culture’ (New York Times 1992 quoted in Wurtzel 1999 (1994); 298). In Britain in 2002, 2 million and 4 million prescriptions were written for the antidepressant drugs Effexor and Seroxat respectively, with 3,000 and 8,000 under-18s on these two drugs (Boseley 2003; Lawrence 2003). Of course, the business of antidepressants, particularly the new range of Prozac-like drugs known as SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors), also is enormously lucrative: in 1993 \$1.3 billion was spent in the US on prescriptions for Prozac alone, up 30% from 1992 (Wurtzel 1999 (1994): 296). Aggressive marketing by company representatives, not unknown in the medical-pharmaceutical industry, no doubt contributes to increasing consumption. But this is unlikely to explain completely the rise of both incidence and medication of depressive ‘illness’. Further, as Wurtzel (1999 (1994): 299) argues, ‘one of the striking elements of this depression breakout is the extent to which it has gotten such a strong hold on so many young people.... Affecting those who [should] have so much to look forward to and to hope for’, as well as the generation(s) that are most clearly identified with current militant practice in (anti-)globalisation politics. In this aspect it is a personal withdrawal – a closing off - from engagement with the future, since it represents a loss of hope, of optimism, in the possibilities that the future holds.

Further, because emotions are felt - experienced - bodily, i.e. are embodied (cf. Csordas 1994), alienation from these emotional responses to trauma can extend further into alienation from ‘the’ body. Thus, ‘[t]raumatic experience leads us to experience our own body as ‘foreign’, in its spontaneous impulses to surrender and flow: if it feels vital to suppress feeling and emotional expression, then this can only be achieved by alienating ourselves from our own bodies’ (Totton 2002: 17). A damaged and silenced ability to respond appropriately to uncontrollable violating circumstances, even when the sources of violation no longer threaten directly, can translate further into actual bodily as well as psychological self-harm practices.

These include self-mutilation or cutting, the use of drugs that afford escape from pain, eating disorders and suicide: sacrificial practices that constitute an offering of bodily pain, blood and control over instincts in return for temporary release from existential pain - deflecting an uncontrollable emotional response into something tangible and seemingly controllable (cf. Milia 1999; Wurtzel 1999; Wolf 1992). Such self-treatment through self-harm clearly is a bit like putting a Band-Aid on a bullet-wound. But given the absence of correct attribution of contextual causes of depression, the sense of isolation and disempowerment that usually accompanies depression, and the experience of impotence in being able to address causes, these acts become rational tactics for the short-term relief of individual psychological pain. All of these practices also are on the increase, from adolescents of divorced families in urban America (cf. Wurtzel 1999) to marginalized farmers in India and Korea.

Conventionally, depression is attributed to organic causes and/or as a response to a personal psychological history that involved the experience of trauma. The former leads to medication as the key means of silencing symptoms. What is problematic (but convenient) about the medication of depressive 'illness' is that it engages only with the *surface* symptoms of depression and not with the content *and context* of this state of being. It thereby enables sufferers – *experiencers* - to maintain a semblance of 'normality' by silencing the experience of suffering, thereby silencing the appropriate attribution of the existential causes of this suffering. This cannot help but conjure up a sense of Aldous Huxley's *Gattaca*-like *Brave New World*, in which an obedient populace is fed a visionary chemical (ironically termed *soma*<sup>20</sup>) to make bearable the hyper-alienation and disempowerment of a supremely regulated society.

Understanding depression as the outcome of a person's individual psychological history instead suggests individual psychotherapy and psychoanalysis as the means of unveiling the deep structure - the original causes - of current distress. The sufferer is urged to take responsibility for reconstituting the self with the benefit of conscious *knowledge* of the effects of personally violating events and circumstances, and thereby to let go of current behaviours and projections that while once necessary as coping mechanisms now are unneeded and dysfunctional. Together with an overwhelming range of self-help books with titles such as *You Can Heal Your Life* (Hay 1985), the experiencer of depression - the ill sufferer of 'affective disorder' - is challenged to heal *their condition*, not necessarily to address the *contexts* in which this condition arose.

I am not suggesting that medication and/or psychotherapy are never effective as forms of pain management or as ways of gaining clearer access to the individual circumstances leading to the experience of depression. What I am attempting to articulate is that these circumstances themselves occur within influential socio-political contexts. The correct attribution of *causes* of depressive dis-ease thereby requires reflection on these collective contexts as well as forays into the personal unconscious. As Pinkola Estes (1993: 246-247) states:

‘[t]he trap within the trap is thinking that everything is solved by dissolving the projection and finding consciousness in ourselves. This is sometimes true and sometimes not. Rather than this either/or paradigm – it’s either something amiss out there or something awry with me – it is more useful to use an and/and model. Here is the internal issue *and* here is the external issue. This paradigm allows a whole inquiry and far more healing in all directions. ... [it] is not meant to be a blaming model, blaming self or others, but is rather a way of weighing and judging accountability, both inner and outer, and what needs be changed, applied for, adumbrated’.

As argued above, experiences of psychological and physical violation pervade everyday social life in today's late-capitalist technocratic hypermodernity. Smail (1984: 93, 1) affirms that depression and related ‘disorders’ therefore can be interpreted as ‘embodied testimony to ... the failures of our social organization’, given that psychological distress emerges not only ‘*within* individual people, but arises out of the interaction of people with each other and from the nature of the world we have created’. This is ‘that secret gnawing *of the heart* that tells us that what we are doing is not right’ (Sontag 2003: 5, emphasis added). It effects the ‘mutilated subjectivities’ (Baron 2003) required to survive an alienating context of late-capitalism - what Böhm and Sørensen (2003: 2) describe as ‘the everyday fascism of contemporary life’. And it underlies the psychological and emotional dis-ease that permits the internalised ‘symbolic violence’ by which a hegemonic and violating status quo is legitimated through ‘our’ own consent. Depression in this reading, like obesity and gun-crime, is more a barometer of *social* (ill-)health, than a mental illness that inhabits unfortunate individuals. Further, as a physiologically and psychologically healthy mechanism for coping with contexts that indeed *are* distressing, violating and dehumanising (cf. Laing 1967), depression might in fact be read as a sign of *individual* emotional *health* as opposed to ‘disorder’ or illness. Activist ‘Rob los Ricos’ (2003) articulates this positions as follows:

In reality, those often labeled ‘insane’ or ‘depressed’ are some of the only sane people left in this world. It makes sense that a growing number of people feel dissatisfied with school, or work, or with their lives in general. Freedom is being stolen from us. we may not understand it intellectually, but we can feel it. We feel lonely, incomplete, unfulfilled. Meaningful social relationships and interactions with

the natural world are becoming extinct ... Sane people do not feel comfortable with this.

The experience of depression is talked about somewhat more candidly in some activist communities than in many other everyday contexts. At the 2003 Earth First! summer gathering, for example, a meeting to workshop mental health issues in the activist community was so popular that a second session was rescheduled. It was as if once a space had been created where these experiences could be shared the floodgates opened, enabling voice after voice to speak of the pain and anger felt at the multiplicitous violence of modern society. For some, depression embodied a long-term and recurrent sense of impotence and disbelief at a world that continues to build walls to separate communities, that imprisons people in cages, that valorises war and arms races as a means of achieving peace, and that is intent on the modification of genes and atomic structures for corporate profit. For others, depression and symptoms of post-trauma distress had arisen in response to the experience of police violence in protest situations, such as at the infamous G8 meeting in Genoa in July 2001; sometimes as a sense of guilt if friends had been attacked while chance circumstances had led one away from a potentially dangerous situation. Still others talked of their alienating treatment at the hands of the formal psychiatric system. One woman, for example, voiced her frustration at having her multifaceted experiences of suicidal despair and intense joy shoehorned into the category of 'bipolar personality disorder' via a psychiatrist's ticks in the boxes of a multiple-choice questionnaire. The predictable prescribed treatment was lithium.

To summarise, a global increase of depression and related 'illnesses' is interpreted here as an indication of the socio-psychological stress exacted by late-capitalism, US unilateralism/imperialism and the 'warganization' of social life. I suggest further that there may be a disproportionately high incidence of depression in the activist communities of the post-industrial north (as within certain 'groups' in the 'global south'), and that this represents a healthy sensitivity to contexts that indeed are traumatising and depressing. Such levels of dissatisfaction and despair do not make for a contented populace. And, given a diagnosis of depression as repressed and internalised anger, they perhaps signal the inevitable and increasing emergence of an angry response to constraining contexts. At the very least, a conscious framing of 'anti-capitalist' politics as a 'politics of possibility' (cf. (Sullivan forthcoming a) – of 'other futures are possible' – constitutes an imaginative energising of a reined in dynamic of depression and hopelessness regarding the future. This indeed is 'a new offensive in the arena of dreams, of rights, of liberty, for the conquest of the future' (Cuevas



2000: 3). Given recent research indicating that participation in activism increases a sense of well-being and mitigates symptoms of depression (cf. University of Sussex 2002; Drury 2003), it is tempting to suggest further that activists are both choosing appropriate channels for self-treatment as well as accurately targeting some of the underlying causes of low mood. I continue this line of thought in the next section.

### **The (f)utility of anger**

Breathing in, I know that anger is in me. Breathing out, I know this feeling is unpleasant (Thich Nhat Hanh 1996).

When actions are performed  
Without unnecessary speech,  
People say, “We did it!” (Lao Tsu 1972).

While a few bad apples might spoil the barrel ..., a vinegar barrel will always transform sweet cucumbers into sour pickles -- regardless of the best intentions, resilience, and genetic nature of those cucumbers. .... When the majority of ordinary people can be overcome by ... pressures towards compliance and conformity, the minority who resist should be considered heroic (Zimbardo in press: 19).

The black bloc was a loosely organized cluster of affinity groups and individuals who roamed around downtown, pulled this way by a vulnerable and significant storefront and that way by the sight of a police formation. ... *The sense of solidarity was awe-inspiring* (ACME Collective 1999, emphasis added).

My argument above is that depression frequently arises as a deflection of anger in contexts where a person experiences impotence in their ability to shift the causes of anger. Conversely, treatment for the ‘illness’ of depression requires both a ‘correct’ identification of causes and an outward expression, release or processing of anger as a healthy, instinctual and empowered response to these causes. Modern society, however, ‘frowns on such displays of strong feeling’ (Roszak 1971(1968): 193). Anger tends to be perceived as messy and uncontrollable, is identified with reactive aggressive behaviour and violence, and therefore is something to be *managed* and regulated - viz. the lucrative anger management workshops that pepper contemporary self-help culture. We talk of the bottling up of anger, and of its explosive impact when the façade of control slips: what for Coupland’s (2000 (1991): 25) underemployed and overeducated American twentysomethings in *Generation X* is described as an ‘*Emotional Ketchup Burst*: the bottling up of opinions and emotions inside oneself so that they explosively burst forth all at once, shocking and confusing employers and friends – most of whom thought

that things were fine'. Or anger is *acted out* whenever an opportunity for release arises, such as in the ritualised hooliganism at a football match, in the gang warfare of inner city ghettos, or in the murky domains of domestic violence.

A common perception of 'the' black bloc and antiauthoritarian tactic is that it is a childish and reactionary *acting out* of anger that, from a psychoanalytic perspective, is driven by adolescent angst and a displacing of Oedipal rage onto 'papa state'. As Miller argues (1995 (1987); 121) '[p]olitical action can be fed by the unconscious rage of children who have been misused, imprisoned, exploited, cramped, and drilled. This rage can be partially discharged in fighting 'enemies', without having to give up the idealization of one's own parents'. So, '[s]mashing things comes off as a little kid whining in the streets about how much he doesn't like his little situation' (Frank 2003); or, '... you did a great job of acting like children on a tantrum while eroding (*sic*) the credibility of the peace rally' (Shot By You 2003). Of course, this accusation of infantilism was precisely what Lenin (1993 (1920)) used to discredit an emerging anarcho-syndicalism in the early part of last century, in his essentialist support for Bolshevik discipline, revolutionary force and centralisation.

Perhaps some perpetrators of a tactics of violence to property as a strategy of protest indeed are attracted by the very potential of violence to the moments of protest that are part of anti-capitalist/(anti-)globalisation politics. Violence in this reckoning is an end – an opportunity - in itself, although importantly the normalising brutality of a context of *everyday violence* (e.g. football riots, pub brawls, domestic violence, etc.) is shifted into the *political violence* of the protest (cf. Bourgois 2001). It certainly is not unknown for such contextual relocations of violence from the everyday to the political to occur. As a Salvadoran guerrilla fighter expressed to Bourgois (1982: 24-25), for example, '[w]e used to be *machista*. We used to put away a lotta drink and cut each other up. But then the Organization [the FMLN – Farabundo Marti Liberation Front] showed us the way, and we've channeled that violence for the benefit of the people'.

*Activism* as opposed to *reactivism*, however, is a targeted expression of the experience of anger, as well as an assertion of *the right to be angry*, given contextual circumstances that are thought and felt to be wrong. This is expressed clearly in the following statements:

Black Bloc is about taking anger and directing it toward an enemy, a rational target ('Joe' in Thompson 2003).

‘Consciously object, sabotage and turn fear into anger’ (WOMBLES 2003c: 14).

Capitalism Kills. People suffer and die because of Capitalist exploitation and wars. The planet is being consumed by pollution and destruction. Millions are made refugees by economic, ecological and military abuses. They are persecuted, detained and deported. The way of life in the G8 countries is based on this suffering and persecution... If we really mean this then to just go into the streets and party is an entirely inadequate response. *It is right to respond to overwhelming injustice with anger* and entirely appropriate to leave Lausanne and Geneva looking like a war zone for a short while (WOMBLES 2003d).

The point about the Black Bloc is that people simply want the autonomy to be able to express their anger as they see fit (Anon. in press: 7).

The black bloc tactic of violence to the physical symbols of corporate-capitalism (cf. inset 3), as well as the Tute Bianchi/Disobedienti/WOMBLES tactic of padding-up in defence and in order to break police lines, thus are articulated consciously and coherently as an instrumental bio-politics (cf. Foucault 1998 (1976)): as a means of physically confronting the repression of the state and its support for ‘... a social system [capitalism] that condemns the vast majority of people to stunted and unfulfilled lives despite our best efforts’ (Jazz 2001: 87 in Graeber 2002: 4). Foucault identifies the body (and psyche) as the locale(s) of power’s micro-physics which, as identified above, can be self-attacked in multiple ways as a further expression of this micro-physics. In the bio-political tactics of protests, the body is re-constituted as the locale of rebellion. The Italian Tute Bianchi (now Disobedienti) go into police lines not to attack, but prepared for a defensive confrontation, intent on exposing the tendency towards violence of the police and even inviting this (for example, through the mock salute of a fist with the little finger raised, which is waved at the police to mean ‘Come on, break it!’ (Anon. 2001b: 3).

With regard to the black bloc tactic, is not difficult to perceive an immediate experiential satisfaction to the targeted violent act in the context of protest. It transforms the lack of agency many experience given a global political economy that constrains options for spontaneity and self-determination and which generates the permanently unfulfilled desire of consumer capital. This is in part by engendering direct, concrete results (the smashed window, the shattered cash machine) in exterior public space (cf. Fanon 2001). It is also in its celebratory embodiment of a euphoric and cathartic *physical* release: a ‘coming alive again’ of ‘sedentary [computer-bound] bodies of late capitalism’ reclaiming ‘their right to movement in the streets ... for muscles to stretch and endorphines and adrenaline to flow’ (Jordan, pers. comm.). As such, these actions in themselves indeed can be valorised as Gramscian moments of self-empowerment (cf. Bourgois 2001: 12) in the face of a socio-political and economic system experienced by many

as repressive and disenfranchising. But when such physical acts also are part of a strategy of ‘smashing’ coherently selected targets it is not appropriate to frame them as the ‘hooligan’s’ violence as an end in itself, since they embody a conscious subversion of the *symbolic violence* that otherwise fosters collusion in disempowering contexts. Militants are quick to distinguish their actions from those of incoherent, unstrategic riotous activity, as in the following statement written after the rioting and street-fighting that took place in Geneva during the June 2003 G8 meeting in Evian:

Importantly, Thus ‘a “Black Block” is not the same as a riot. In the looting and street fighting I saw in Geneve the people were mostly local kids, some didn't even cover their faces. They broke any windows for the rush of it and threw anything at the police, in anger (launching plastic bottles at armoured riot police will not have much impact...) For me this popular anger is the result of alienation and the crushing of people’s lives and spirits by wage slavery, media propaganda and consumerism. It is beautiful in its way but it is not the same as a Black Block.

A well organised Black Block (like we were on Sunday) is made of autonomous groups of friends who are well prepared and take the streets with some common tactical understanding of what we are there for. To take space and defend it with barricades and projectiles, to use the fleeting moment in which we control the space to destroy the property and symbols of the disgusting system we are all forced to live under. This property damage is NOT “random vandalism” it is highly political and usually carefully targetted. On Sunday I saw debates between different groups (and languages!) about the politics of different targets, stones in hand. Some targets were attacked, others left intact as a result of these discussions (WOMBLES 2003d).

In fact, taking the above statement at face value, it seems to me that there is not a great deal of difference between these actions and the carefully planned sabotage of deliberate ‘monkey-wrenching’ acts (cf. Abbey 1991 (1973); Do or Die 2003) occurring outside the circumstances of major street protests. Take, for example, the statement made by veteran UK Trident Ploughshares activist Ulla Roder, arrested in March 2003 for causing criminal damage to a Tornado ground attack aircraft in protest at the attack on Iraq:

I looked at the seat in the cockpit in the streamlined white Tornado warplane, which I had just entered. In my mind I had the picture of a young pilot, boy, son, father; the many years of fear for the people of Iraq; for their survival; for a new world war - nuclear war; fear of losing the little bit of freedom we people have left in this world, to a state which has officially declared that it wants “Full Spectrum Dominance” on earth as well as in space and which has shown all willingness and cynicism to use whatever means of power to gain this. All this made me lift the red and black bolt-cutters in my hand. Crash! I shouted out aloud in the hangar. There was no-one to hear, but it helped. “We don't want your war, Bush and Blair!” This for all the dead civilians in Iraq and all the children still suffering at poor hospitals, caused by 12 years of sanctions against civilians. Crash! The control panel was out of commission.

The echo of the hammering was still in the air when I started on the wings. The hard surface resisted my attempts. **This** for my disabled friend who cannot afford a decent wheelchair. **This** for my other disabled friend who daily has to crawl up a stone stairway outside his house, because a proper house with disabled access cannot be provided for him

and his family. **This** for all the marginalised people, the sick and older folks; **This** for all the people in poverty whose basic needs are not fulfilled; **This** in hope for the future of our children in the world. I had done enough.

The nose cone got the rest of my anger and all the energy I had. Lies! Disarmament treaties and negotiations - thirty years! International law! Ignorance! All lies to buy time for the weapon industries and military to re-arm for the warfare of the 21st Century. Shame! Shame! Shame on all nuclear weapon states. Shame for all the time the courts have ignored the arguments of ordinary people. Now really tired, I slammed the bolt-cutters down on the back of the plane. This for all the arrogance from intelligent, learned people, who have never glanced long enough into the eyes of a young drug addict to understand why they suffer, but coldhearted send them away for shoplifting for their daily needs instead of giving them access to proper treatment because that is too expensive. A fiver a week or you go to prison! Problem solved. Then I returned to the cockpit and silently put the bolt-cutters down. On top I placed a piece of bread and in silence I symbolically shared it with all the hungry breaking off small pieces and spreading it around, praying for peace and justice in the world. I then went down to two fuel containers on the ground looking like two ugly fat bombs. On each was placed the sign: TO THE GULF. I put my last bit of bread on each of the signs. My job was done. No more will anyone face the horrors of war from that plane. One more war machine was disarmed. I felt a deep inner peace.

I now waited for someone to arrive. After a while I was very respectfully and peacefully detained and led away, while the alarm sounded through the whole base. Good! More delay in the preparations for war. And now I am facing a trial, maybe for £25 million pounds worth of damage - more than my entire family will earn in a lifetime by hard and decent work. A Tornado costs £70 million pounds. We paid for this plane and we will pay for all the other planes I saw out there that night, being got ready for an illegal war (Roder 2003).

I quote this in its entirety for its coherence of intent, its linking of contexts, and its beautiful, angry passion. It is unlikely that many people will appreciate or accept the parallels between the sober, directed sabotage of an older woman such as Ulla and the smashing tactics of antiauthoritarians, black bloc or otherwise. But these parallels exist in both intent ('mindful destruction' of *things* that cause, or represent causes of, violence to life (cf. Anon. in press)), and felt experience (anger and need for release). Even the clear difference in activist style between accountability and clandestinity<sup>21</sup> appears to be breaking down, if Ulla's non-appearance at two recent court hearings is anything to go by (Trident Ploughshares 2003).

Although the media and other commentators continue to focus on the divisive effects of violence perpetuated by antiauthoritarian and insurrectionary protesters, or to dismiss its relevance to activist politics by focusing on the role of *agents provocateurs* in precipitating and/or contributing to these actions, perhaps there actually is an emerging *appreciation* of tactical variety in the anti-capitalist and peace movements. Indeed, just as disbelief at the discounting of voter opinion worldwide regarding war on Iraq arguably has created and energised a global peace movement, it might also be claimed that events over the last two years

are contributing to a renewed recognition of common concerns and desires as opposed to differences in anti-capitalist/pro-justice politics more generally. The following statements, concerning protests at the G8 meeting in Evian, June 2003, and the WTO meeting in Cancun, September 2003, indicate a sense of solidarity between activist ‘groups’ and strategies, as well as a conscious and emergent complementarity between tactics in the moments of protest:

Personally I felt that because our actions might be effective, we would certainly be attacked [by police]. I wanted to be able to defend myself and those around me. This was confirmed to me when the first police charges took place in Lausanne (*sic*). The first charges were against the P&S [i.e. Pink and Silver<sup>22</sup>] carnival, not the Black Block. The two Blocks were clearly separate, acting in different areas. The police fired gas into the peaceful carnival because it got too close to the delegates (*sic*) route: i.e. because it was effective. Many of the P&S Block ran to behind the Black Block who were more prepared to defend against the attack. *If it wasn't for the active resistance slowing the police advance the space we held would have been cleared much more quickly. If it wasn't for the music and energy of the P&S Block it would have been a very dark place to be.* When the two blocks merged under police attack it gave the space life and [we] refused to give it up without a fight (WOMBLES 2003d).

We make our way over to the side of the crowd, where we can escape if necessary. The Infernal Noise Brigade<sup>23</sup> is playing, and the Koreans and campesinos [farmworkers] are up front, challenging the fence. We can see it shaking under their assault, but the barricade is reinforced by big flanges of steel in front and behind, and is hard to tip over or pull down....

The agreement all the action groups have made is to respect the campesinos. The black bloc, the more militant anarchist contingent, have made themselves padded body armor and shields, but have agreed not to use them unless the campesinos want them to. Now some word is given and they move up and begin pulling on another section of fence. It is one of those perfect moments that sometimes happen in action: the campesinos on one side, the urban street warriors on the other, pulling in unison on the barriers (Starhawk 2003b).

This is not to suggest that sectarianism is not rife or that there is not often bitter disagreement between groups on the subject of tactics. Of course there is. Some antiauthoritarians consider disobedienti to engage in negotiated and staged confrontations with police (cf. a/b 2003). Such allegations are comprehensively denied by disobedienti as both incorrect and deeply insulting to those of them who have been badly beaten and arrested by police during actions (Anon. 2001b). Pacifists consider militants to wreck the credibility of a protest (cf. Schwa 2003). Militants consider pacifists and reformists to be sell-outs to a dehumanising system that depends on their voluntary servitude (cf. Anarchist 2003).

But given the clear failure of recent massive protest marches to actually shift policy and political practices on issues such as war on Iraq, it perhaps also is possible to discern a shifting orientation in tactics amongst protesters towards a more proactive stance, as well as a greater

appreciation of the reasoning behind militant actions. This is conveyed in the following testimonies. The first was written after masked protesters in San Francisco attacked corporate and state buildings associated with the pending attack on Iraq, focusing on the right-wing San Francisco Chronicle and the building housing the federal government's Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) currently criticised for its increasingly draconian approaches to immigrants and especially those associated with Islam. The second was written by a UK activist after protests in Lausanne against the June 2003 G8 summit meeting in Evian.

Honestly, when I heard about this rampage on Saturday night from a friend who happened to see it ... I really was sad. I mean, the emotion of sadness actually swept over me for a few hours.

I thought to myself, "here we go, the day would have been almost perfect, but maybe it's the end of the peace movement already." I mean, I was out there with many of my friends that day - we came as a group of almost 30 - and we were all out there because we are opposed to violence in all its forms, and we see war as being the utmost form of violence.

But I have to admit. I've been struggling the past few days, reading post after post on indymedia, and though I still feel I could NEVER do anything like this myself, I have to say, the arguments for these actions are well reasoned, intelligent, and simply must be considered.

I just thought the anarchists that have had so much attention since Seattle were a bunch of punks, with too much teenage angst out for a good time.

One of the tenants of my philosophy is that people should always struggle not to dehumanize others. I think it is what allows violence to be possible. But I was talking to a buddy at work yesterday about what happened, and he said, "hey graham, have you ever TRIED to look at it from the other side? I mean, don't you think you're dehumanizing THEM by not even trying to listen to their viewpoint? you're always talking about that right?"

This really got me thinking. ... a few hours later, a few muslim guys came to the counter to order a couple of coffee (*sic*). I took their order, and when I was filling up their cups I overheard a piece of their conversation. One of them was saying to the other "You wouldn't believe it!!! I swear, I was walking by there last night and the whole front of the [INS] building was trashed!! The windows were broken, there was spray paint on the walls, i can't remember exactly what it said...have you heard anything about this? Someone must've done it during that big march yesterday. Yusuf is gonna love it when he hears about this!" anyway, that just topped it off. I mean, these guys were really excited about this. Hell, I went to a few of those protests down there the other week, but I never really thought of what it must be like to feel like you're at risk of being detained.

I don't think these actions alone will have any real affect of the INS process or on government policy, but I just can't write them off anymore.

I guess different people just have different ways of doing things. If we can stick together on this we'll be stronger (Pacifist 2003).

I have, in my lifetime, participated in many different kinds of action. My experience has shown police repression and state violence is not a response to violent demonstrations, but to effective ones. We have the right to ineffective protest, outside the "yellow zones" which protect the powerful and enable them to ignore us.

I took part along with millions of people world wide in the largely peaceful demonstrations on 15th February 2003. I watched as they ignored us, and went to war in the name of democracy. It made me sick and angry. It showed that the biggest demonstration in history will not change things if it just voices dissent. Direct action of all colours is the only way to make change.



All the blockades on Sunday [against the G8 summit in Evian, June 2003] took place in this spirit. They were NOT about expressing an opinion. The people's "opinion" of the fucked up system we live in has been voiced loud and clear, time and time again. The blockades were about direct disruption of a high profile meeting of heads of state - to actively make the G8 face resistance (WOMBLES 2003d).

Prosaically, an instrumental analysis of violence in protest situations might focus on the particular short-term *results* that this generates. Violence has long been articulated as part of a conventional left strategy to make explicit the violence that is systemic to contemporary capitalism by drawing out the forces that the corporate state has at its disposal to suppress dissent: exposing the fallacy and fantasy – the contradictions - of the Hobbesian 'social contract'. Thus, '[i]f these sumits (*sic*) take place to the sound of helicopter blades amid burning barricades and tear gas it unmasks the real violence hidden by the slick corporate show. And it makes people sit up and take notice in a way that marching peacefully cannot achieve. It gets noticed and opens political space for ideas to break through and grow' (WOMBLES 2003d). Violence at protests in 'first world' contexts is held up as being more likely to be reported worldwide, thus further contributing to an emerging 'globality' of shared concerns and experiences by shattering a possible illusion amongst the world's 'poors' (Desai 2002) that everyone in the West 'lives a life of indolent luxury' (Anon. in press: 14). And by drawing attention to the fact that 'there is dissent in society', riots can open a discursive space that can be taken up by more moderate activists. Mueller (2003: 10) describes this as a 'division of labour' in which militants 'create the stage' while moderates 'write most of the play', and argues that this has been the case in Sweden, for example, where '[o]ne of the reasons for ATTAC's<sup>24</sup> meteoric rise on the Swedish political scene was its deft use of ... the media attention surrounding protest, that is, the space opened up by rioting [at the EU summit in Gothenburg, June 2001] ...'.

Perhaps the most politically powerful aspect of protest actions, however, is not the actions themselves, but the social and psychological dimensions that infuse organisation and experience(s) of them. Take, for example, the forming of groups of affinity. These are small, extra-institutional socio-political groupings emerging from direct relationships, trust, shared interests and actions, reciprocity and emphasising egalitarian processes of decision-making. As such they attempt a shift to group emergence from shared values as opposed to conventional identities (such as sex, race, religion etc.) or geographical location (cf. WOMBLES 2003e: 10). Given that capitalism means that 'most of our encounters have already been defined in terms of predetermined roles and relationships in which we have no say' (Willful Disobedience n.d. b),

and that it functions in part by fragmenting social relations – favouring competition over cooperation and requiring objectification (e.g. people = human resources, ‘nature’ = natural resources) rather than communion, then an emphasis on direct relationships in the context of affinity groups can be considered, and is consciously framed as, an insurrectionary act and process in itself. Thus:

‘the refusal of formality and the development of relations of affinity cannot be seen merely in tactical or strategic terms. Rather, they are reflections in practice of what we are fighting for ... to reappropriate the capacity to determine the conditions of our own existence, i.e. the capacity for self-organization. ... developing a shared struggle that is based in the recognition and, at its best, the passionate enjoyment of our very real and beautiful differences’ (Willfull Disobedience n.d. b).

From a complex systems perspective the dispersion of power and increasing connectivity between individuals that these organisational practices embody, are among the ‘simple rules’ that lend themselves to the creation of conditions ripe for emergent systemic change (cf. Notes From Nowhere 2003: 19-29; 63-73; Sullivan forthcoming a).

At the same time, participation in the organising and practice of actions that transgress the boundaries of ‘good bourgeois behaviour’, especially when accompanied by a clear cosmology that conveys the broader meaning of such actions, clearly has socio-psychological significance in terms of reinforcing internal social and psychosomatic coherence (or *habitus*) (cf. Cross 2003 cf. Bourdieu 1990 (1980)). This is at least in part by ritualising the experience of repression in these contexts (Mueller 2003: 7). The sharing of such extreme experiences is integral to the building of solidarity. As Barker and Cox (2003: 8) note, ‘[f]or many activists ... it is a turning-point to be at the receiving end of police aggression and to discover that an institution they have been brought up to see as underwriting their safety and the moral order is in fact prone to violence against “ordinary people” ... pursuing what they understand to be eminently moral (and often altruistic) pursuits’. And again, ‘[b]eing attacked by heavily armed riot police is terrifying. It has happened to me many times now and I think you never get over the fear. But I have come to feel more and more like fighting back and I have come to understand more the value of the Black Block’ (WOMBLES 2003d).

Of course, the dynamics of any group or organisation can be conservative and constraining, and activist communities are no exception to this. For example, the internal *structuring* of what Marcellus (2003: 3) describes as a ‘pretentious and authoritarian elitism’ among those prepared to commit violent acts can itself take on a conservative and exclusionary tendency, such that participation becomes ‘more about just identifying oneself with a ... group’ than about

libertarian and strategic/creative political action. Or the pressure to be 'radical' and to eschew any form of populism again can propagate an exclusionary elitism (as noted in Anon. 2001b: 4). But in ideal terms, the presence of dynamic organisational practices emphasising autonomy and affinity in themselves constitute the means to mitigate against a potential sedimenting – or molarising to use Deleuze and Guattari's term (1987 (1980)) - into the restrictive and regulated structures characterising legally-constituted social groupings. Such practices include: the fluid, dynamic and temporary nature of affinity groups formed for the purposes of specific actions; the access activists have to emerging global activist cultures - located virtually via the internet (elists, discussion groups etc.) and physically (at meetings, parties, actions etc.) – that recursively open and shape activist values and tactics; and the conscious adherence to anarchist and network principles of organisation that recognise the value of horizontal networks as well as temporary hierarchies.

In other words, a gulf of difference distinguishes consciously targeted activist violence to property and preparedness for confrontation with police from an unconsciously reactive, infantile acting out of anger. The former are manifestations of broader and recursive cultures of practice, organisation and discourse. In idealised terms (again) they represent the weaving of a social fabric based on mutual aid, affinity, reciprocity, direct relationship and solidarity that in itself constitutes a psycho-cultural break with the accepted warp and weft of a capitalist sociality that assumes individualism, competition and exploitation. While the experiential power of the 'rite of passage' of irruptive situations and the contribution of such 'peak experiences' (cf. Maslow 1973) to individual and collective identities cannot be underestimated, the social practices with which they are accompanied arguably are at least as politically challenging as the moments of protest constituting a direct action bio-politics.

### ***But ...***

When you are acted upon violently, you learn to act violently back (CrimethInc. Workers' Collective 2001: 70, 36).

But it's true, chronosophy does involve ethics. Because our sense of time involves our ability to separate cause and effect, means and end. The baby, ... the animal, they don't see the difference between what they do now and what will happen because of it. They can't make a pulley, or a promise. We can. Seeing the difference between *now* and *not now*, we can make the connection. And there morality enters in. Responsibility. To say that a good end will follow from a bad means, is just like saying that if I pull a rope on this pulley it will lift the weight on that one. To break a

promise is to deny the reality of the past; therefore it is to deny the hope of a real future (Le Guin 1974: 187).

The above analysis locates me outside a strictly pacifist activist discourse and practice, or at least, in support of a position of ‘deep’ questioning of a reactionary violence/non-violence dichotomy in protest politics. Indeed, I actively affirm the transformational and communicative value of ‘sitting in the fire’ of anger and conflict (cf. Mindell 1995).

But please read the small print. If (anti-)globalisation politics is about moving *beyond* the oppositional categories that support the status quo – about proleptically imagining other possibilities for being/becoming (cf. Habermas), and about a process of creating and doing the new as well as contesting the old – then violence surely has a compromised place within ‘the movement(s)’. It is a response that is defined by, and thereby increases, the reactionary violence of the state in its support of *Empire*<sup>25</sup> (e.g. Plate 6). It thereby further robs ‘the subject’ from the potential and possibility of (self-)knowledge, creativity and autonomy (cf. Foucault 1998 (1976)), confining ‘us’ to subjected subjectivities – to interior spaces of ontological shallowness and immaturity (cf. Wilber 1995). To echo thinkers and activists from Ghandi to Foucault the political use of violence slips easily into a reactive opposition that strengthens rather than outgrows the strong (cf. Newman 2000: 3). It reinforces the power that is, by definition, present in opposition to its resistance, while also making the opposition more and more like its enemy, amounting to ‘a terribly ugly mirror image’ (cf. Böhm and Sørensen 2003: 6, 12-13). This is the equation that violence + violence = more violence. By resonating with the particular masculinities of a conventional, humourless and Leninist Left perspective that emphasises the violent necessity of the revolutionary moment<sup>26</sup>, a politics that otherwise is framed as antiestablishment and subversive also becomes conventional rather than radical: overly bound by past imaginings of what is possible. Perhaps more to the point, and as noted by one black bloc-er, ‘[i]f this movement progresses in terms of escalating violence alone then we will lose, because they have guns and we do not’ (Anon. in press: 19).



Plate 6. A small percentage of the visible police presence that marked constitutional discussions at the EU 'Intergovernmental Conference on the Future of the Union', Rome, 6 October 2003. Source: IMC-Italy 2003b

Further, just as the structural and political violence of neoliberalism sediments into interpersonal violence in everyday domains (Bourgois 2001: 29) – constituting what Bourdieu refers to as the 'law of the conservation of violence' – violence in the context of protests also easily shifts between the 'meaningful' political act into the boring violence of the everyday: *viz* reported incidents at Thessaloniki of molotovs being thrown into buildings whilst antiauthoritarian 'comrades' were inside, and the potentially disastrous impacts on 'ordinary people' inhabiting apartments immediately above burning commercial outlets (also cf. Marcellus 2003)<sup>27</sup>. And there are implications too for gender-politics. From the Celtic women warriors of Britain at the time of Roman imperial expansion (e.g. Lothene Experimental Archaeology n.d.) to women pirates worldwide in recent centuries (Klausmann *et al.* 1997), bio-political violence clearly is *not* an exclusively male domain (also Ruins 2003; LeBrun n.d.). But a strengthening of particular 'hegemonic masculinities', i.e. that valorise physical strength, machismo (in relation to other men as well as to women), and emotional passivity (discussed in Cross 2003: 14-15; also Viejo 2003), perhaps does generate its own momentum and problematic – one which again becomes akin to that also represented by the machismo of a male-dominated, body-armoured riot police (cf. Plate 7). Given reports of sexual harassment

made by women at the anarchist encampment at Thessaloniki's Aristotle University in June 2003, for example, it indeed is tempting to see an emerging dynamic in militant factions whereby 'worthy' political violence is transmuted and normalised 'back' into the banal and disempowering violence of everyday sexism<sup>28</sup>.



*Plate 7. Police at the EU summit, Thessaloniki, June 2003. I could not resist including this classic image of machismo. But I note that that while it might generate humour when consumed as a picture, the experience of riot police in the streets is anything but funny. Sources: La Haine 2003.*

Thus, it is hard for me not to stay with the conclusion that violence, whether delineated as structural, political, symbolic or everyday, acts to buttress inequalities, as well as being 'profoundly disabling', both physically and psychologically (Bourgois 2001: 12). Given the context of structural and symbolic violence characteristic of late-capitalism, of *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000), and of US military imperialism, however, it also is hard to avoid the corresponding conclusion that the period of social change in which we find ourselves will be associated with escalating levels of violence, in (anti-)globalisation protests as elsewhere.

### **And now? Becoming uncivil society ...**

It starts when you care to act, when you do it again after they say no, when you say "**We**" and know who you mean, and each day you mean one more' (WOMBLES 2003: 39).

I'm trying to say what I think brotherhood really is. It begins – it begins in shared pain (Le Guin 1974: 54).

[T]here is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed - the deed is everything (Nietzsche, from *On the Genealogy of Morals*, quoted in Butler 1997 (1990): 285).

I am reluctant, though, to exit on this note. Another zeitgeist of the moment is of the emergence of an unprecedented *global* peace movement (FOCUS 2003) *without leaders* (Solnit 2003): identifying war and the arms trade as inextricably linked with capitalism *and* as systemic constraints on human potential (Sullivan 2003a). That the 'movement of (anti-)globalisation movements' has 'ceased to cower in fear' (Mueller, pers. comm.) in the wake of the summer of 2001 - which, with the G8 summit in Genoa, indicated the ferocity with which states are prepared to suppress the movement(s) in the postindustrial north, and which ended with the (un)predictable rupture of September 11<sup>th</sup> - is a validation of its resilience and relevance. Indeed, instead of the death of the 'anti-globalisation' movement that was predicted by politicians and the media in 2001, there has been a rebirth of radical street politics, accompanied by an increase in militant tactics (e.g. McGreevy 2003), and a celebration that *We Are Everywhere* - as declared by the title of a recent compendium of anti-capitalist experience and practice (Notes From Nowhere 2003). Even against the everpresent spectre of state-corporate-imperial violence, it is tempting to envision this as an emerging critical mass of connected ideals and practices that, as the situationists (and complexity theorists) would have it (in Perlman 1992: 15), might reach beyond a point of no return.

This is a global historical moment that seems poised between hope and despair (cf. Jordan and Whitney 2002). Here extraordinary spaces exist: for 'a progressive activism that is one not of reaction but of initiation' (Solnit 2003: 6); where 'the thoughtful [wo]man' might no longer remain 'a hermit in the thoroughfares of the market-place' (Thoreau 1993: 38), and thereby contribute to 'fuller' intellectual and praxis philosophies for human being/becoming (also see Reeves 2003)<sup>29</sup>; and, as identified by Desai (2002: 8), where a passionate beyond-Left emergent politics might breach the categories of modernity with a collective effort of creative, sensuous 'force rather than violence'. As Debord (1983) famously wrote, alienation cannot be combated 'by means of alienated forms of struggle'. This goes beyond simply saying that the end does not justify the means, to affirm that the means *are* the end. Clearly, just as for Negri (2002) the 'multitude' is 'a whole of singularities' that cannot be collapsed into a homogenous mass of people, the political tactics of the multitude also do not comprise competing alternatives to each other: instead they are complementarities that in themselves affirm the pluralism sought by the rhetoric of the movements. The difference and singularities embodied



by tactics are themselves politically heretical given the fundamentalism associated with global power and universalist agendas (cf. Baudrillard 2003: 4). In other words, no one has a monopoly on tactics. But actions will be stronger in total if their experience is communicated and debated throughout the activist communities, such that the corresponding openings - reclaimings – of social, physical and psychological spaces are able more fruitfully to jostle, overlap and re-create each other.

For myself, I have in mind a brilliant image by graffiti artist Banksy, of a masked protester with arm raised to violently throw – not a molotov, but a bunch of flowers (see Plate 8). For me, this captures both the engaged anger and the seriously subversive and celebratory creativity comprising the hallmarks of a global anti-capitalism that has its feet planted firmly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is a processual, *interstitial*, Dionysian radical politics that exploits, explodes, and subverts the instability of correspondences between signifier and signified, inside and outside, the messiness of experience and the reified categories of modernity. In doing so it attempts a continual transcendence – a going beyond – that acknowledges the destruction inherent in creativity, but that is not a call for nihilism as an end in itself.



Plate 8. *Attacking with flowers instead of molotovs. Banksy stencil. Source: On-line. Banksy n.d..*



Radical global anti-capitalist politics is an insurrectionary proactive politics of the lived rather than the managed human. The trans-national soil in which it is fertilised is the painful legacy that we have been bequeathed: of the Holocaust and Hiroshima; of Chernobyl, Bhopal and the Exxon Valdez; of Thalidomide, BSE and the technocratic penetration of genes and atoms; of advanced democracies promoting the trade of arms and the precursors of WMDs to repressive regimes worldwide; of endless privatisation and commodification – from nature, to states of mind, to knowledge; of the construction of a 25 foot high concrete wall to separate communities even as the memory of the Berlin Wall is still warm. Is it surprising that we distrust and even despise modernity's fabricated ideologies of self-interested economic rational man, of 'there-is-no-alternative' political realism and of faith in civilisation and technocratic solutions? Or that we celebrate and become activists, nomads, anarchists, pagans, outlaws, ravers, 'wild women', sambistas, poets, WOMBLES, clowns, shamans, hactivists, heretics – modernity's 'freaks', everywhere? Of course, I could just be depressed ...

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<sup>1</sup> 'Tasers' are gunpowder-launched metal darts that trail wires carrying an electric charge which stun the person targetted (Mulholland 1999). Currently, this weapon is 'being tested and deployed by a large number of law enforcement agencies and armed forces globally' (Toje 2002: 2).

<sup>2</sup> The Schengen agreement (named after the village on the borders of Luxembourg, France and Germany where the original agreement was signed in 1985) refers to a common European zone of security and justice through which people can move without customs or passport checks and in which countries cooperate on judicial and policing matters (Auswärtiges-Amt 2003). The country signatories to date are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden (Auswärtiges-Amt 2003). The Treaty has a safeguard clause that enables states to continue border controls for internal security reasons (Europa 2003). Concerns regarding the creation of a European 'fortress' zone relate to the strengthening of external border controls and the policing of third country nationals entering the zone, and particularly to the establishment of the Schengen Information System. This is a computerised service with some 10 million files that gives 'police and immigration officials a multinational data base, of undesirables and people suspected of having committed crime ...' (Europa 2003). Critics therefore perceive an intent 'towards

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creating [a] Single European Army, tighter, more co-ordinated immigration controls, a more effective 'security/repression' apparatus: Europe for the rich' (Uio 2003).

<sup>3</sup> For example, the recent 'GM Nation?' public debate in Britain found that 86% of people are unhappy with the idea of eating genetically modified foods and 84% perceived that GM crops would harm the wider environment. Further, 93% of respondents believe that GM technology and associated policy is driven by profit rather than public interest. Given that the head of the BioScience Unit for the UK's largest biotech company (Bayer CropScience) holds two government advisory positions regarding biotechnology in Britain (the Agricultural Biotechnology Council (which he Chairs) and the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Council), these perceptions perhaps are not surprising. These issues nestle within a European context in which the European Commission has ruled that no country or region can govern itself as GM free; a ruling that in turn is set within a context of the US taking the EU to the WTO courts on the basis that its earlier moratorium on GM crops, and even the labelling of foods containing GM products, are barriers to trade (facts and figures reported in Schnews 2003c; also see [www.gmpublicdebate.org.uk](http://www.gmpublicdebate.org.uk) and [www.corporatewatch.org.uk/genetics/genetics.htm](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/genetics/genetics.htm)).

<sup>4</sup> The treatment of some 120,000 Roma exiles who have been forcibly exiled/ethnically 'cleansed' from Kosovo was highlighted in particular: at the time of the EU summit of some 700 Kosovo Roma were being detained at the Macedonian-Greek border, denied access to the EU via Greece for the purpose of seeking asylum. Roma now are scattered as asylum seekers across Europe, many held in detention centres such as Yarl's Wood in the UK, where in 2002, inmates staged a protest against the conditions of their detention that culminated in a fire affecting a large part of the centre. Several of the former inmates are now in prison (Trans-European Roma Federation 2003).

<sup>5</sup> It is not unusual for the public and institutional need for convictions to result in the intentional framing of individuals consider to fit the required criminal profile, particularly where challenges to state authority and terrorism acts are concerned (to take one famous example for the UK, the 'Guildford Four' were wrongfully imprisoned for fifteen years under The Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1974, to be released in 1989 to the words from the lord chief justice that '[t]he officers must have lied'. (cf. Pallister 1999). In today's climate of moral panic regarding terrorism, together with the emergence of special policing powers under anti-terrorism legislation (e.g. UK's Terrorism Act 2000), there is increasing slippage between Public Order and anti-Terrorist situations. A case in point is the recent use of the Terrorism Act (2000) during policing of DSEi (Defence Systems and Equipment International), Europe's largest arms trade fair, that took place in London's Excel Centre, Docklands, in September 2003. Here, police used 'stop and search' powers under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act (2000) to search numerous peaceful protesters, a move for which the civil rights group Liberty were granted a judicial review in the Royal Courts of Justice. During this review it emerged that the Metropolitan Police in fact had had a continuous rolling authorisation of these powers signed every 28 days by David Blunkett himself since February 2001, covering the entire Metropolitan Police Region. Refusing an anti-terror 'stop and search' can effect a prison term of up to 6 months, and/or a fine of up to £5,000. More information at [www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk](http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk).

Clearly, there is an argument to be made that this slippage (between Public Order and Terrorist threats) is justifying draconian policing measures and sentences and giving rise to a need for definable culprits as palpable 'results' of policing and security strategies. This, of course, is nothing new, particularly where people are questioning or contesting the power or legitimacy of state authority, whether this is legitimised by votes or maintained by force. Currently, however, the scapegoating of individuals for actions participated in by larger collectives is becoming a feature of (anti-)globalisation protest politics. Following the G8 meeting in Genoa, July 2001, for example, some protesters who had been arrested and subjected to beatings while detained at Bolzaneto Barracks a temporary were detention centre, were brought a pre-written statement to sign which stated that they 'had used batons, molotovs, cobblestones ...' (Indymedia 2002). When one protester stated that she hadn't done anything, the response from her captors were that 'it doesn't matter ... for us you are all the same' (Indymedia 2002). Similarly, at protests during the EU summit in Gothenburg, Sweden, in June 2001, numerous arrests and charges were made based on fabricated and manipulated evidence, and with collective sentences in some cases discounting individual evidence and actions (Imcista IMC-UK 2002). And currently, a spokesperson for the Lemanic Social Forum is being accused by 'a Genevan judge for the "crime" of inciting to civil disobedience during the demonstrations against the G8 summit in June 2003', actions that involved thousands of activists acting independently in Lausanne, Geneva and Annemasse (Javier 2003).

<sup>6</sup> i.e. The UK-based White Overalls Movement Building Libertarian through Effective Struggle ([www.wombles.org.uk](http://www.wombles.org.uk)).

<sup>7</sup> I trust that it is clear to readers that I am *not* equating such militancy in anti-capitalist protest with terrorist attacks on human life. Graeber (2002: 66) in fact claims for the US context that, 'after two years of increasingly militant direct action, it is still impossible to produce a single example of anyone to whom a US activist has caused physical injury'.

<sup>8</sup> Three events will suffice to illustrate this point. In May 1998, to coincide with a WTO meeting in Geneva and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of GATT, forerunner of WTO, demonstrations occurred in 17 cities, and Switzerland experienced 'the most significant instance of public disorder in [its] post-war history, including mass protests,

clashes with riot police and property damage to the retail outlets of multinational corporations' (Chesters 2003: 11-12). On the weekend of 18<sup>th</sup> January 2003, anniversary of the start of War in Iraq in 1991 and thus chosen as a global weekend of action against the pending war on Iraq of 2003, 2,000 masked American protesters attacked San Francisco's British Consulate premises and then proceeded to smash the offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (McGreevy 2003). On 4<sup>th</sup> October 2003 clashes in Rome between several hundred masked protesters and police, the smashing of retail outlets and the petrol bombing of a temporary employment agency, marked the beginning of a series of multilateral negotiations regarding the content of the EU's first constitution (Black 2003).

<sup>9</sup> I am not forgetting that those in the 'Global South' who are contesting the insidious effects of neoliberalism on their lives and livelihoods have had to endure much higher levels of violence for much longer, and it is not unusual for protests to culminate in the death of protesters at the hands of police (cf. Bretton Woods Update 2003). It is in part due to outrage and empathy regarding these incidents and trends that people in the post-industrial north are contesting and critiquing current globalisation processes, and particularly the securitisation of the inequities and injustices required by global state-corporate capitalism.

<sup>10</sup> For example, in the weeks prior to the global day of action which succeeded in closing down the meeting of the governors of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Prague in September 2000, fear was carefully instilled in the public via declarations by the media and government authorities to the effect that protesters might kill if necessary and that the city's inhabitants should stockpile food and medicines. All public schools in the city were closed for a week, and families were asked to declare in writing that students would stay outside the city and away from the protests (ostensibly for their own protection) (reported in Notes From Nowhere 2003: 307). In the lead up to Mayday in London 2001, a veritable moral panic was created by the police and media regarding the supposedly violent intentions of the UK's WOMBLES (White Overalls Movement for Building Libertarian Effective Struggles, [www.wombles.org.uk](http://www.wombles.org.uk)). Similarly, after a long period of using the media to create an atmosphere of tension around the gathering of social movements in the first European Social Forum, the Italian Prime Minister attempted to cancel the forum two weeks before the event was to take place (in November 2002) on the basis that violence was expected (Berlusconi's ownership of some 95% of the Italian corporate media no doubt came in handy in this campaign).

<sup>11</sup> For example, the policing costs of the protests that closed the WTO meeting in Seattle, 1999, were somewhere in the region of \$9 million (Barber 2000), and in September 2003 the costs of policing the Defence Systems and Equipment International arms trade fair in London's Docklands were upwards of £1 million (Press Association 2003) (even though only around 1500 arms trade protesters were present in the area at any one time). The estimated value of lost business alone in London on Mayday 2001 was £20 million (Benham and Sykes 2001).

<sup>12</sup> The Anarchist Youth Network have affiliated local groups who meet regularly in London, Swindon, Manchester, Hereford, the North East of England, Stroud Valleys, Surrey, Worthing, the West Midlands and Essex, as well as university groups at Bristol and at the London colleges of Goldsmiths, SOAS, LSE, UCL and Royal Holloway (Anarchist Youth Network 2003b).

<sup>13</sup> The current Assistant for Strategic Futures in the Office of Force Transformation of the Pentagon (Thomas P.N. Barnett) reports in a recent article, for example, that 'of the 132 military interventions of the USA in the past twelve years, 95% were in areas he calls »gaps«, which (in his terminology) were either not ready or willing to couple up to ... capitalist globalisation and in which ca. 2 billion people live' (Barnett quoted in Rilling 2003: 6).

<sup>14</sup> For a chilling analysis of the tight construction of America's current global 'hyperpower', which clearly displays the links between the interests of powerful individuals in oil, military and government institutions, see Rilling (2003).

<sup>15</sup> Witness, for example, the increasing incidence of requests by states that citizens report 'suspicious behaviour' observed in fellow citizens: from Irish health minister Michael Martin proposing to set up a telephone hotline so that people can inform on those breaking the country's new smoking law (West 2003); to plane spotters at Fairford (from where B52 bombers were taking off for Iraq), Lakenheath and Mildenhall military bases being provided with relevant phone numbers for the reporting of 'anything of a security nature' during the war on Iraq (Lee 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Jensen (2000: 108).

<sup>17</sup> Ted Kaczynski is the infamous 'Unabomber' who between the late 1970s and early 1990s embarked on a politically-motivated bombing campaign in the USA in protest at his sense of the 'techno-nightmare' of modern capitalist society. I trust that readers will accept that in referencing his 'manifesto' I am NOT endorsing his use of physical violence against people as a tactic of protest, or even his reactionary political philosophy.

<sup>18</sup> We associate cages with animals held in captivity, and I believe that this is what Pinkola Estes refers to here. However, people currently are being held in cages by the world's largest 'democracy', viz the caging of detainees at the legal black hole of the American prison Camp X-ray at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and as reported in one of the quotes at the start of this piece, some arrested demonstrators at the November 2003 protests against the FTAA in Miami were held in cages the size of a dog kennel. But as many commentators observe there is also 'the cage inside our heads': i.e. the internalised societal strictures with which we are desensitised and imprisoned, allowing

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the recreation of structures that otherwise might be experienced as alienating and disempowering. This is captured powerfully in Anne Stokes' illustrations for One Minute Silence album *One Lie Fits All*, Taste Media 2003.

<sup>19</sup> It is not only victims but also perpetrators that are created by dehumanising contexts. A well-known social psychology prison experiment illustrates, for example, that a social situation that sanctions a discourse of dehumanisation (in this case of prisoners) is all that is required to shift the behaviour of 'ordinary people' into that of vindictive perpetrators of physical and psychological violence (cf. Zimbardo in press).

<sup>20</sup> *Soma* and *Haoma* are the Aryan and Iranian names respectively for an entheogenic plant source used religiously in the Middle East and India at least up to several centuries BC. Its botanical identification is unclear (Ott 1996: 200-204).

<sup>21</sup> This is the difference between accepting that the legal system provides an appropriate space for the justification of one's actions, versus carrying out actions while masked and with every intention of avoiding arrest and trial by a justice system perceived to be supporting the structures being contested.

<sup>22</sup> Pink and Silver refers both to the colours worn by London-based percussive band 'Rhythms of Resistance' (ROR) and to a tactical *style* in protest, based on exploding the contradictions embodied by capitalist discourses and practice through the deployment of 'tactical frivolity' involving music, dance, costume, carnival and 'revolutionary play'. As the ROR website explains, 'Rhythms of Resistance formed as part of the UK Earth First action against the IMF in Prague in September 2000. A Pink and Silver carnival bloc, focused around a 55 piece band, detached itself from a march of 67,000 and outmanouvered police resources defending the IMF annual summit. With an international 'black bloc' and a large contingent from the Italian movement, 'Ya Basta', three diverse forms of direct action worked towards a common goal and resulted in the shut down of the IMF summit' (Rhythms of Resistance 2003). Samba and Afro Bloc drum bands emerged in 1970s and 1980s Latin American contexts as strategies of both political expression and black awareness: as 'a force of resistance and source of self confidence' (Browning 1995; Rhythms of Resistance 2003). Several percussive bands have formed in the UK and throughout Europe, such that 'an international network of percussive resistance to the march of capitalism is now emerging' (Rhythms of Resistance 2003).

<sup>23</sup> Like ROR (see Footnote 22), the Infernal Noise brigade are a 'marching drum battery and street performance group activated by massive political and cultural uprisings', whose intent is to be 'a soundtrack for insurrection'. 'Rendering ideology obsolete, we practice the politics of pleasure and subversion on the streets. We are not interested in chanting dogmatic slogans, nor is there a banner behind which we all wish to march. We attempt, through our aesthetic sense and our fierce commitment to the politics of joy and desire, to create a space of carnival. A space where rules are broken and anything is possible' (Infernal Noise Brigade 2003).

<sup>24</sup> (ATTAC is the 'international movement for democratic control of financial markets and their institutions', see <http://attac.org>).

<sup>25</sup> Through, for example, legitimising the use of police violence as self-defence, increasing the severity of sentences meted out to protesters, and justifying greater citizen surveillance tactics by states (as highlighted in Mueller 2003).

<sup>26</sup> The following quote from Italian Marxist Antonio Negri, today the celebrated philosopher of autonomism (i.e. the political tradition influencing black block coalitionists) can suffice as an example of this position: 'Proletarian violence, in so far as it is a positive allusion to communism, is an essential element of the dynamic of communism. To suppress the violence of this process can only deliver it – tied hand and foot – to capital. Violence is a first, immediate, and vigorous affirmation of the necessity of communism. It does not provide the solution, but is fundamental' (1984: 173 in Callinicos 2001: 4).

<sup>27</sup> Although by the same reasoning if people are left abused by 'the system', and treat their own selves abusively then acting without respect for others is a perhaps unsurprising outcome (Judith 1996: 237).

<sup>28</sup> Bourgois (2001: 12), for example, notes that political repression and 'worthy' resistance in wartime El Salvador during the 1980s now 'reverberate in a dynamic of everyday violence akin to that produced by the fusing of structural and symbolic violence during peacetime', such that the per capita homicide rate was almost twice as high after the (US-sponsored) Civil War as during it (p. 19).

<sup>29</sup> A current effervescence of the theory:practice:praxis nexus can be seen in a number of new and emerging initiatives – some of which have bubbled up in isolation but which are overlapping, coalescing and re-constituting in novel ways. For example, a Radical Theory Workshop was registered as the November 2003 European Social Forum attracting a number and range of participants that was completely unanticipated (cf. Sullivan 2003b). This effort is continuing via an elist and plans to organise a one-day Radical Theory Forum to coincide with the next European Social Forum, as well as to register possibly more than Workshops within the Forum process itself. Independently of this an 'anarchist:academics' elist emerged from a meeting at the Anarchist Bookfair of October 2003, and currently there is some cross-over of participants occurring between the two lists and the beginnings of discussion regarding shared interests and intent. At the same time, the first international conference on 'Social Movements and Activist Research' was held in Barcelona in January 2004, bringing together academics and activists, academic activists and activist academics from a wide range of countries including north, south and central Americas and from throughout Europe. The theoretical and pragmatic interests of these events and

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discussions, groups and individuals, are reflected in a process of ‘talkshops’ supported by CSGR due to take during 2004, under the title of *academia, activism and postanarchism: theory and practice in (anti-)globalisation politics*. All these initiatives build and magnify existing theory:practice initiatives such as the UK-based Signs of the Times ([www.signsofthetimes.org.uk](http://www.signsofthetimes.org.uk)) and Shifting Ground Collective ([www.shiftingground.org](http://www.shiftingground.org)).

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